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WOODSTOCK STORIES

POEMS AND ESSAYS

A BOOK OF THE CATSKILLS

FOR THE PEOPLE

BY

WILLIAM BENIGNUS

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We Artists and Writers

We are human, we are humans on this Earthstar. If our thoughts soar in exploration to regions unknown and are of no importance to indifferent martmen, we nevertheless must build our creations on firm ground. We shall not sell our souls to a public who wants ragtime and horseplay.

An artist can not be great until, by striving and battling in spirit, he has found himself, has gained knowledge of his own soul and won control. Then only his inner world can become God's world and the outer world no more dominates him. If he is victorious in these strifes and battles with his own self, then no more the evil, disturbing, harassing influences, assailing from without, can shake his faith or throw him off the balance. He reaches a clarity entire, a tranquility and cheerfulness which already on this earth are a taste of life in heaven. Then he is enabled to produce works of art of lasting value to men, works which have the quality to enrich and strengthen the life of the soul and help to lift us to regions of imperishable beauty and purest joys without compare.

True art is a necessity to the world, it is spiritual food. Art is a manifestation of the Spirit. Many of us, who devote our life to Art, and bring sacrifices, must suffer for ideals and walk roughest roads. Real works of art can only be produced by selfdependent souls to whom Truth and Beauty are dearer than the applause of the mob, the clink of coin and the seductive rustling of new dollarbills.

With regard to my book I say: "I wrote it for the sake and love of it. My objects are *Nature* and *Art* and, of course, *Humans*, for they belong into these two categories.

William Benignus

Cubists and Futurists

At first sight the art of the Cubists and Futurists, especially in paintings and sculptures, astonishes, is striking and, as something new and unusual, may awaken in the beholder a certain interest. At closer study it does not satisfy, is repulsive to the finer feelings of advanced souls, leaves you empty or makes you inclined to pull out the impressions left like disfiguring and strangling weeds in your minds orderly garden.

This art,—if you can call it art—, does not soar higher than the surface and shows only disturbance. It does not dive deep, is superficial, a color scheme, a carricaturing of truth and of natural forms. It is an easy way of expression of disorderly and diseased minds, proclaiming incapability. Beauty, in the highest sense, is absent from its creations. This art is mainly commercial. Cubists, Futurists and their adherents are on the whole people with undeveloped souls gone astray by dulled senses. The atmosphere to their liking is that of poisonous cigarettes, narcotic drugs, whiskey and absynth. They are materialists, no doubt, and hardly take heed to the terse, philosophical saying of *R. L. S.*: "The true materialism is to be ashamed of what we are."

Modern real Art is something different. It is very progressive in the right direction. It seeks new ways and finds new ways of expression and is able to produce creations of perfect beauty which can stand rightfully side by side with the works of our unsurpassed masters of centuries ago and up to our time.

William Benignus.

MAR -5 1921 © CLA609722

No 1

Woodstock Stories, Poems and Essays

By

WILLIAM BENIGNUS

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Motto:

"Let us be cheerful and understanding in heart, kind and true in soul, aspiring in spirit, strong in good will and purpose."

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N. I. B.

In manuscript ready, but not given in the book, are the *Stories* "The great Belted Kingfisher", "The Yellowjackets and their Destroyer"; the *Poems* "When in Spring warm breezes are blowing", "The Fairy Queen", "Her heart apine", "Im Gedenken"—"Schon lange her. 1898", "Der Regentropfen und das Meer"; the *Essays* "What war and politics mean", "Make them quit", "Mountains and Sea", "The Soul is like a Mountainbrook", "At the Crossroad", "Artists and Nature", "The World of Thought our Real World", "Sayings of Odin".

Woodstock Stories. Poems and Essays

Foreword and Dedication

Quite some years ago,—if I remember right, it was in 1905—, I wandered on foot in late summer *100 miles thru the western Catskills*, from Ellenville, Ulster Co., N. Y., where I picked huckleberries on Shawangunk Mountain, to Oneonda and up to Cooperstown and Fly Creek, Otsego Co., N. Y., where I picked hops for Sheldon H. Elderkin and others. I never forget that journey, the blueing mountains, the whispering forests, the singing brooks. The most wonderful part was my walk thru romantic "Frost Valley". I met good, plain, honest people all along. That journey I put in words, but the Ms. became lost. I succeeded later on, thru the kindness of *Col. Henry W. Shoemaker*, to publish my "*Shawangunk Mountain Stories*" and my "*Stories of the Catskills*". They are on file in the *New York Public Library*, 42d Street and 5th Ave., if anybody cares to read them. The latter book I might better have called "A Nook in a Catskill Valley". But it was in my mind to continue my explorations of the Catskill regions, and so I let the first title stand.

My "Woodstock Stories" are a continuation of my "Stories of the Catskills". All of my *Woodstock Stories* were written there, but in most of them is the atmosphere of the Catskills, are the heart and soul of the clear mountainbrooks, of the green mountainforests, of wanderclouds sailing on the blue sky, of stargemmed nights and of glorious days full of buoyant life and sunlight. The title of the book covers this, and the book itself gives you a peep into the *Catskill Wonderland of marvels, mysteries and secrets.*

I wrote the book as well for my own enjoyment as for the enjoyment of all readers who take interest in Nature and Art.

I wrote it, before all, for readers who know the Catskills and love them and whose feelings, convictions and ideas about the enchanted regions, which I describe, I tried to give utterance in plain words.

William Benignus
New York City, November 1920.

To the Readers who love the Catskills
my book is dedicated.

Gems

Gems, that sparkle fair and strong,
poets only have in song,
but, like heaven's stars so bright,
many-rayed they stream their light,
chase the darkness, cheer the heart,
gems they are of rarest art.

From photo, copyright by Louis E. Jones, by permission.

Mountain Pastures, Woodstock, Ulster Co., N. Y.

In the background rises the eastern part of the *Overlook Range.* The mountain farthest to the right is *Overlook,* the mountain in the centre is *The Sentinel* or *Horsehead,* to the left is *The Saddlebow.* In the middleground nestles in the *valley of the Sawkill and Tannery Brook* the village of *Woodstock.* Behind the big trees near the centre is visible the white spire of the *Dutch Reformed Church.*

The Arkansaw Traveler

A Fairy Ditty. — By *William Benignus*

Fast on the winds ride the tumbleweeds,
jolly in company traveling.
"Why so fleet on the winds, little weeds?"
"Just because we like traveling."
"Hoiho, where do you put up tonight?"
"Where the winds put up! Where the winds put up!"

Not Selfinterest, but Sacrifice

In stepping before the public an artist must be ready for judgments of his work. The beginner is apt to retort. To a master it matters not; knowing the values he created he is able to confront criticism by friend or foe with equal fortitude.

If an artist brings before the world the child of his heart,—be it book, composition, painting, sculpture, architectural or engineering work—, he often hears this remark: You do it in self-interest. I say: Every worker is worth his wage. But this does by no means cover the case. To a real artist fame and the money question are of secondary consideration. He works, because he follows *the call of the inner voice*, consciously, not unconsciously, — the Conscious having its origin in the Unconscious. Take, as a shining example, the greatest master of music, *Beethoven*. I am sure that he knew for which purpose he worked and why he created his masterpieces. He was impelled by the Spirit. He consciously followed the call of his *inner voice* and worked and toiled, forgetting, while he toiled, his uncongenial surroundings and all hindrances, his poverty, his privations, his bodily sufferings, himself even, eliminating not his personality, but his earthly I, and merging his soul and spirit into the great *Allconscious*, the Soul of all Souls, the Spirit of all Spirits, the Light of all Lights, the Life of all Lives, in which we breathe, move and are immortal.

Wilhelm Benignus.

Woodstock, Ulster County, New York, an Artists' Colony

Woodstock Story No. 1
By William Benignus

In the morning of October the 8th, 1920, a beautiful autumn day, I was standing in front of the Woodstock Post Office, waiting for the mail, when a voice from the street hailed me: "Halloo, Benignus! How are you?" That was Mr. Henry Weil, a New York journalist. "You are the first acquaintance I met here," he said. "And the first thing I found here were some of your songs laying on a table in the "*Irvington Hotel*". "Strange," I said, "but I am glad to meet you here. How do you like Woodstock?" "The place is just wonderful," replied Mr. Weil, "I am here for the first time and came this morning from Kingston, where just by a whim I took the stage for Woodstock." "How long are you going to stay?" I asked. "I have to go back with the next stage to Kingston," said Mr. Weil, "but I return in a week or so to visit Mr. Vente on his farm near Stony Hollow. This gives me a chance to come up here and take a better look around. For the country here is just beautiful." And Mr. Weil is right. Like him so thinks, I believe, every visitor, and one or the other buys a lot and a house and settles down as a Woodstocker.

Go where you will in the neighborhood, north, west, east, south, to Birdcliff or to Bearsville, to Saugerties or to Montana, you find plentifully spots where enticing vistas and panoramas of the *Catskill Country* can prominently be seen. *Woodstock* itself, the village, is very interesting. The place could as well be called *Brooktown*, for clear brooks or creeks wind thru the village, so the *Sawkill*, the *Tannery Brook* and the *Meadow Brook*. The words "brook", "creek", "kill" mean the same thing, a running water flowing toward a river or stream.

About 6 years ago the attractions of the land drew many New York artists to the place. The natives at first did not fancy the modern ways of the newcomers, but they have become reconciled, for the visitors bring business and money to the place. Painters, sculptors, architects, musicians, writers for news-

papers, magazines and periodicals, authors and similar folks have made Woodstock their summerheadquarters. The painters and paintresses, the latter often in bloomers or pants, generally stick together in gangs. In the good old summertime they wander thru the streets and into the fields and woods, carrying their paintboxes, brushes, easels, campstools, select choice places and dot the landscape picturesquely. I tell you they swank their old brushes in style, these regular artists!

45 years ago there was a different class of people in Woodstock than there is now. Tanneries and sawmills were going in lively style and the people were always busy. The bluestone-business was blooming. Quarries producing the bluestones, which were used as flagstones and for building purposes, were numerous in and around Woodstock. In some of them 20 men were employed steadily, and every weekday from 10 to 40 loaded wagons with bluestones left the village. Now only two quarries are running, the larger one belonging to *Steward Jones*, who has a few men working, changing, when necessary, quarrywork with farmwork. Woodstock has grown a little since that time. It will grow to be a city. by and by. The houses stand apart, with plenty of space to spare for flower gardens and vegetable gardens. Good boarding houses and hotels accomodate the visitors. "*The Allens*", on the hill, has a studio building close by and offers a fine view of the mountains and valley. "*The Irvington*", Hotel and Restaurant, Mr. A. Kohl, proprietor, serves good meals and gives rooms at moderate prices during all seasons. The "Tannery Brook House" is also very recommendable. Several good garages for autos and repairing are handy in the village.

A prominent landmark is the *Dutch Reformed Church*, on Main Street, opposite the Post Office, with its white, sharply pointed spire crowned by an arrowweathervane turning on a brassball.

Woodstock has 4 churches: *Dutch Reformed Protestant Church, Rev. J. F. Nichols, D. D.*, Pastor, and *Noah L. Mower*, Sexton; *Methodist Church; Lutheran Church; Christian Science Church.*

By the way, at the Presidential Election, November 2, 1920, at least two thirds of Woodstock's legal voters, myself included, voted for *Warren G. Harding. President-Elect Harding* is a *Baptist*—an officer in the First Church, Marion, Ohio.

Mr. Noah Mower, of the Reformed Church, began his services as Sexton, 33 years ago and is ringing the churchbell since that time at proper occasions. That was 1888. at the time of the big blizzard, which I remember very well, for I was shovelling snow 10 feet high in New York that time. The *Reformed Church* was organized Jan. 5, 1805, and celebrated the Centennial or its 100th Anniversary Jan. 5, 1905. *Rev. W. F. Luther* was Pastor and Chairman. He moved away. The church offered a hearty welcome to *instructors, authors* and *artists*. I am sure, that "Welcome!" has had effect since then. I often listened Sunday mornings from Diedrich's house nearby to the singing of the assembled congregation and was astonished to hear the churchfolks sing their hymns and songs to the melodies "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles", "Ich hatt einen Kameraden", "Ich bin ein deutscher Knabe". To my mind came the lines of one of my own poems:

"Du deutscher Geist, der wie Sonnen flammt,

durch dich soll die Welt noch gesunden!"

Behind the Irvington Hotel on the Rock City Road, stands *Mr. Stanley B. Longyear's* residence and garage. Longyear owns and manages the autostages and buses which bring the travelers to and from Woodstock to their destinations. One of the best autoroads in New York State leads from *Kingston* to *West Hurley, Woodstock, Bearsville* and farther on. The autoroads around the *Ashokan Reservoir*, to which this *New State Road* brings you, are without reproach.

Correct distances are:

Kingston, West Shore Depot, to *Woodstock*, centre, 12 miles, to *West Hurley*, 7 miles; *Kingston*, city limits, to *Woodstock*, centre, 10 miles; *Woodstock* to *West Hurley*, West Shore Depot. 4 1/10 miles, to *Ashokan*, on the Reservoir, 4 miles; *Woodstock* to *Meads Hotel*, a walk straight up the mountain, 2½ miles, to the left on the Rock City Road to *Shady*, 3 miles, to the right on the Rock City Road a walk up the mountain to

the top of Overlook Mountain and the *Overlook House*, 5 miles; *Woodstock* to *Saugerties*, 10 miles; *Woodstock* to *Bearsville* 2 miles; *Bearsville* to *Venicia*, 12 miles; *Woodstock* to *Montana*, 1½ miles. When you walk on the flanks of Overlook you find often these significant signs adorning the way (I found "Frost Valley" on my walk of 100 miles thru the Western Catskills littered with them): "No Passing thru Private Road"; "No Thorofare. Please keep to the Highway"; "Private Property. No Thorofare"; "Tresprassing on these grounds is forbidden by penalty of the Law"; "Keep off. Dogs!"; "Danger. Keep out!"; "No Strangers allowed here".

The *Village Green* or *Village Centre*, a small green place shaded by old locust trees and maples, is on Main Street in front of the Dutch Reformed Church. There during June, July, August and until middle of September a *fair* is held every Saturday morning, to which the people stream and have a pleasant, entertaining time and buy things which catch their fancy: objects of art, sculptures, paintings, useful articles, cloths, shirts, shoes, stockings, homemade cakes and pies, honey, candy, everything cheap.

Opposite the church and *The Green* on Main Street is the *Post Office*. An hour before it opens for mail delivery a waiting crowd gathers in front of the little house and holds sweet gossip. On the iron railings along the sidewalk they roost, and it is a special pleasure to run the gauntlet between the waiting crowd lining the sidewalk on both sides.

In the village are 2 grocery stores, one owned and conducted by *Happy* and *Elwyn*, the other by the *Elwyn Brothers;* 1 newspaper and stationery store, conducted by *Norman Elwyn*; 1 barber shop, the artist being *Mr. Larry H. Elwyn*, shortly called *"Larry the Barber"*, the father of the Elwyn Bros.; 3 ice cream salons and lunch rooms, one of them owned by *Mr. Noah Mower;* 1 butcher shop; 1 tailorshop; 1 shoemakershop; 1 drugstore and artshop.

The Drugstore and "Little Art Shop" is conducted by *Mr. L. E. Jones*, who makes and sells very fine photographs of Woodstock landscapes.

The old shoemaker is an expert in his line. His replies are original and typical, i. e.— Customer: "Are the shoes done?" Shoemaker: "No! Aint done yet." Customer: "When will you have them done?" Shoemaker: "Cant tell. Got too much work to do." Customer: "Tomorrow?" Old Shoemaker: "Cant tell. Sometime next week."

There is no laundry and no bakery in Woodstock. A laundry would do well during the summermonths, a bakery probably all the year round. You cannot get pies or cakes in Woodstock, unless you bake them yourself or wait till Saturday, when the grocers sell a few which come from Kingston. The bread comes from Kingston daily. In the summertime 3 Woodstock dairies give a sufficient supply of milk.

One excellent dentist is in Woodstock, *Dr. R. B. Whelan.*

The Woodstockers are a friendly, sensible, pleasant lot, all good fellows. A typical Woodstocker is *Larry the Barber.* He is a first class artist in his line, has a good knowledge of humans and their doings and can tell something of Woodstock's history.

Not to forget *Dr. Mortimer B. Downer*, the busy village doctor. He knows Woodstock's history and its legends by heart. During his 25 years in the village he assisted at the birth of 700 babies and brought them into the light of day sound and happy. That means much and is worth while. He owns a fine house on Main Street, near the end of the village toward Bearsville.

I had the pleasure to make the personal acquaintance of some of the most distinguished artists and writers. On the Saugerties Road *Mr. William M. Fisher* superintends the "Art Exhibition" in the *Art League* Building. On the same road, farther on below the *"Saugerties Hotel"* live the famous painters *Carl Eric Lindin* and *Birge Harrison.* Mr. Harrison also owns a house near Bearsville. A little way farther on, on the left side of the road, lives during the summer months the New York artist *Robert Chandler* on his Ritterburg. A jolly big fellow he enjoys life in his own way, in his own style and according to his own tastes. He has no objection to the Sawkill, which flows near by, across the street, but he prefers stronger and fiercer stuff than Sawkill water to satisfy his inside longings.

In Birdcliff, on the Rock City Road, halfway up the mountain, live several writers, instructors, savants and painters of note.

In Montana Village lived summer 1920 the Italian sculptor *Alfeo Faggi*. He returned to New York City in September, then went away to Chicago.

Near Bearsville live on Rohland's Estate the artists *Paul Rohland* and his wife *Mrs. Caroline Rohland-Spears*. The paintings of both denote mastery. Paul Rohland's flower pieces are of special delicacy and sunny brightness and are, like his portraits, of charming spirituality. In October Mr. and Mrs. Rohland left for Southern France and Italy on a tour of study and pleasure. They intend to return autumn 1921.

The painter *Ernest Finey* and his brother *Paul*, the sculptor, have their new dwelling in the woods not far from Rohlands'. It was designed by Ernst in original style, was built summer 1920 and stands treesurrounded as a realized little aircastle with studio, very practical and comfortable.

Leon Kroll, in his studio below Rohland's house, accomplished summer 1920 some of his masterpieces. His painting "A Day in August", an American idyll of great charm and freshness, was during November on exhibition at the Gimpel and Wildenstein Galleries, 647 Fifth Ave., New York City, with works of the "New Society of Artists", of which he is a member. Kroll has the gift to give his models *personality* in his paintings and, what few can do, lets their souls harmonize with the characters of landscapes. I know painters who think it great art to wipe out the personalities of their models and who even go far enough to transform them into blots of paint. *Leon Kroll* has mastered to a nicety the science of "Dynamic Symmetry" which *Jay Hambridge* evolves in his treatise.

On Rohland's estate lives also during the summermonths the musical genius *Eugen Haile* with his wife, the singer, *Mrs. Elise Haile* and his daughter, the violinist, *Winifred*. Many are the fine songs which I heard *Haile* compose and sing up there.

In closing this story I mention, with my other good friends whom I introduced to the readers, the painter *Mr. Albert Beckwith Campbell-Shields*. He lives with his wife *Elizabeth* and his two little ones, *Pat* and a sweet girlie, in his own house now not far from Tannery Brook, near Main Street. He just loves the mountainbrooks, whose big trouts he knows to entice masterfully. To the ever singing crystalclear and pearlfoamy cascading souls of the brooks he gives forms full of witchery in his paintings. He hails from the old royal Irish family of the O'Sheas, whose love of freedom is well known.

I also met in Woodstock the American artist *Mr. Arndt* and his mother. He is a descendant of *Ernst Moritz Arndt*, the German poet of worldrenown.

For the first time I met in Woodstock my new friend, the eminent poet and writer *Mr. Elmar Vente*. He owns now Hans Koch's farm, which I described in my "Stories of the Catskills". Koch's moved away.

During his 2 weeks vacation in a mountainsidehouse in the middle of the woods near Ashokan, *Mr. Oskar Kollbrunner*, novelist and poet, at that time Secretary of the Swiss Consulate, New York City, gave me a glad surprise by visiting me in Diederich's house on a fine August day.

I had not the pleasure to meet the poet *Richard Le Gallienne*, who lives near Shady.

That's *Woodstock*. Many love it. The Catskill Mountains are ever there, the green forests and the flowery meadows and the mountainbrooks are ever there to make the hearts rejoice. As a leavetaking to the good people who hustle there and work there, because they must or because they like it, or who have a fine time and take it easy, because they like it and because they can afford it, I say with my Connecticut friend, mother Jane, the old Irishwoman: "God bless you!"

If you mail your letters or parcels to or from Woodstock, Ulster Co., New York

If you mail your letters or parcels to or from Woodstock, at the foot of the Catskills, write always clearly:

Woodstock, Ulster Co., N. Y.

For if you leave out "Ulster Co., N.Y.", your letters or parcels might go astray, as there are many other "Woodstocks", of which I name here a few:

Woodstock, Ala., — Conn., — Ga., — Ill., — Ky., — Md., — Minn., — N. H. There is also a Woodstock in England, then there is a "New Woodstock" in Madison Co., N. Y., a "Woodstown" in New Jersey (N. J.) and a "Woodside" in Long Island, N. Y.

To follow this advice will be to your own advantage and will lighten the burden and make easier the work of our efficient Postmistress *Miss Clara M. Park.*

W. Benignus.

Woodstock, Ulster Co., N. Y.,
Oct. 27, 1920.

The Little Moongoldgirl

There is a little Moongoldgirl,
a lovely, dainty, perfect pearl.
Just listen, and you hear her croon:
"I datched a big biece ob de moon!"
I guess, the thing for us to do
is, just to catch a moonpiece too.

The Village Smith of Bearsville

Woodstock Story No. 2
By William Benignus

There is much lore to be told about Woodstock of years ago, many interesting stories and legends reaching back to the time when the first palefaces settled here and the Indians were still the rightful owners of the land. Whoever has time and leisure to collect these legends and has the gift and genius to write them down in plain good style, will find appreciative readers enough all over the United States.

A few years ago I camped in the *Shawangunk Mountains* with the purpose to collect the legends and sagas of these wild and romantic regions over which the Indians used to roam and hunt and whose old trails are still used by the huckleberrypickers who swarm over the mountains in the months of July and August and by hunters who come up there later. My time and my lack of funds did not allow me to carry out my intention. The same is the case, as far as my collecting of legends and sagas of the *Catskill Mountains* is concerned, not to mention the *Adirondack Mountains* which, in this respect, I never had the opportunity to see, much less to explore. I can but touch the matter here and give other writers, who are working under more favorable conditions, a start.

Regarding my *Shawangunk Mountain* Stories, long out of print, the well-known Poet and Author, Historian, Collector and Recorder of Legends and Folk-Lore of Central Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Mountains, Col. Henry W. Shoemaker wrote about them (Altoona Tribune", Sept. 1, 1916): "Nature fashions her masterworks faultlessly. Religion can be taught by the study of the wonders of nature, of scenes that are an inspiration to human souls.

The movement to preserve the old time legends and tales of our mountains seems to be spreading in various directions. Recently *W. Benignus*, a New York poet, has issued an attractive volume entitled *"Shawangunk Mountain Stories"*. These stories were collected in the Shawangunk Mountains in New York state and all of them are intensely interesting and novel.

Mr. Benignus is to be congratulated for his work in securing these old tales before they were lost in oblivion. Some

of them obviously bear the touch of Mr. Benignus' own genius, but the foundation of all of them comes down from Indian days. *In addition to their value as folk-lore, a collection of tales of this kind has an added purpose in creating an interest in natural scenery.* The places described in such a book are bound to be sought out by nature lovers, and in this way each locality will become possessed of a coterie of staunch friends."

During my stay in Woodstock my friend Eugen Schleicher mentioned to me that there had been a *Woodstock War* long years ago and that a blacksmith in one of the neighboring villages could tell particulars about it. It might be the smith in Bearsville.

I decided to investigate and started for Bearsville on the beautiful afternoon of Thursday, October the 14th. While I walked leisurely along the State Road an auto came up in the same direction and I hailed it. Its occupants, a young couple, gathered me in kindly. We rode 50 yards, when, bang-g-g!!!, the right front tire busted. "Too bad," said Leon, "you will have to walk to Bearsville." "Probably, and thank you very much," —I said, "but you have to go back to Woodstock for repairs." The auto slowly turned and crawled back to a Woodstock garage. I slowly walked ahead and soon hailed a chauffeur who came along in a fine, big car. He took me up and along and let me off in front of the Bearsville Post Office and Grocery Store of *F. and C. Schultis*, Dealers in General Merchandise, established since 1875. There the chauffeur showed me the smithy, which stands across the brook to the right.

A man carrying an empty barrel walked from the smithy across the road toward a house opposite. It was the smith himself, *Mr. Conrad Losher*, who had just closed up his blacksmithshop. I walked up to him, we greeted and I made known the purpose of my being there. Mr. Losher is a pleasant, plain, greyhaired, intelligent looking man of about 56 years of age. Of the Woodstock War he could but tell me that he had heard from his father that such a war had been. We nevertheless had an interesting talk. "I feel discouraged," said Mr. Losher, "since last year." "What happened?" I asked. "My only boy died, Cornelius. I have a married daughter, but I cant get over loosing him. He died of influenza." "How old was he?" I asked. "Twenty. He was," Mr. Losher told me, "the finest and best boy that ever lived. He had a quiet way about him and never said a bad word to me or anybody. He honored his parents and was kind to everybody. If a fellow who was hungry came along and asked him for something to eat, he always gave him the best. If a man short of money asked him for a loan and a helpout with a little money, he always gave him something. He loaned money even to strangers and if I said to him: "Cornelius, that fellow will never pay you back", then he just smiled and said: Never mind. Strange to say, they all paid him, even if some of them came back after a years' time or later." "It's too bad you lost him." I said, "I sure would have liked to have Cornelius as a friend. But brace up, man! We all have to get over our losses. I myself lost a splendid brother in Germany 1918, during the war thru that malicious influenza. Brace up, man, take courage. We have work to do in the world yet, and that is the best balm. Your boy is not lost to you. We all meet again in the other world."

Between the Post Office and Grocery Store on one side and Mr. Losher's house and smithy on the other there flows the *Sawkill*, a clear brook which supplies the City of Kingston with pure drinking water. It is the same brook which flows thru Woodstock on its farther way, runs along the Saugerties Road as far as Mr. Birge Harrison's residence then swings to the right and flows thru the woods. Near Robert Chandler's Ritterburg it forms a fine waterfall. Mr. Losher told me that he has seen the Sawkill rise 10 feet higher, so it ran over its banks and flooded the highway, carrying with it trees, rolling rocks and tearing madly and powerfully along. That was in 1888, the year of the big blizzard, and it rained like a cloudburst 24 hours steadily when the brook rose so high.

From Bearsville two good autoroads lead to *Venicia*, 12 miles away, and one leads to *Shady*, to *Pine Hill* and to the *Ashokan Reservoir*. The little road uphill, passing the Grocery, leads to Mr. Harrison's Beardsville residence, which is situated on rock land and swampy one too, but just suited to an artist's taste.

My inquiry about the Woodstock War brought me to Mr. Schultis. He could not tell me more than that he had heard

his father speak about it, but that he knew no particulars.

In Woodstock I heard later on that a blacksmith lives in Saugerties who knows all about the Woodstock War. The following story is the result of my further investigations.

The Woodstock War

Woodstock Story No. 3
By William Benignus

A certain blacksmith in Saugerties possesses a heirloom in the shape of an enormously long trumpet, that might be called a *Catskill Alphorn*. He claims it to be a relic of the *Woodstock War* of which he relates very interestingly as follows:

"Many years ago most of the land around Woodstock was claimed by rich landholders in New York. Some of their descendants are still living in New York and can tell the story also, but not from the point of the old Woodstock farmers. These sturdy and freespirited farmers who were tilling the land, however did not recognize the claims of these rich landholders, but defended their rights against the usurping usurers with all available means.

Thus it happened that when the New York landlords sent their men to collect dues or taxes, they were received by the Woodstockers with derision and mockery and had to return to their masters emptyhanded.

But these greedy masters must have that money of the toiling landtillers. So they armed their collectors, who came back to Woodstock and most likely by use of force made collections from the natives which they threatened and terrified.

This bitter experience thought the farmers that resistance only could help. And as they had a commom cause, they stood together to take up the fight against the intruders, if need be to the bitter end. They mobilized the whole valley, so that if the collectors came again they should not find one of two defenseless families to defy them. but fifty determined farmers and their households, every man, woman, boy and girl of proper age armed to the teeth.

The great question was, how to collect such a force quickly and how to spread the alarm most effectively. There must have been some brave men from Switzerland amongst them, who knew the use of the Alphorn and its meaning. For it was decreed that every farmer should provide himself with a horn or trumpet of a kind like the blacksmith of Saugerties has one, so that when the collectors and their henchmen approached, watchers could give the alarm. Every farmer hearing it would get his own horn and blow it, to call to arms, and the populace of the valley armed with muskets, scythes and hayforks would run to assist the oppressed neighbors.

And the collectors came again to enforce their unrightful claims. This time the valleys and hills were ringing with hornsignals, and the farmers, wearing masks, caught the collectors and their men, gave them a sound thrashing and sent them back to New York not with money but with black and blue souvenir marks."

These old Woodstockers had independent spirits and stood up as bravely for their rights as the old Swiss mountaineers against the robberknights in the time of Arnold von Winkelried.

The Catskill Mountains as seen from Woodstock

During my stay in Woodstock,—from July 9th till November 5th—, the mountains as seen from the village interested me always. The residents, upon inquiry, could only tell me the name of old Overlook and Round Top and of The Ohio, the hill. Of the rest they said: They have no names. Maybe they have official ones, which I did not know, so I decided to name them myself. Here goes:

If you stand opposite Happy and Elwyn's Grocery Store across Main Street and look toward the North and Northwest you have before you the *Overlook Mountain Range*, which commences near Woodstock and ends near Bearsville. Farthest to the east, toward the Hudson, is the mountain which gives the range its name, the *Overlook*. He is the highest of the company. On his crest stands the "Overlook Mountain House". West of the Overlook are mountains of original shapes which I name *"Saddlebow Mountains*. In the centre of the *Bow* stands *"Mead's House"*, a pleasant hotel which, in white color, is visible from Woodstock. The mountain to the right of the bow, resp. east of it, is *"The Sentinel or Horsehead Mountain"*. Mead's Hotel is open during winter, the "Overlook House" is closed. The mountain to the left of the bow, resp. west of it, is *Horseback Mountain*, while the next mountain west, toward Bearsville, is *Horsetail Mountain*. Behind it stands *The Watchman*, broad and solid. Where Horsetail Mountain ends another range of mountains begins and swings around the Ashokan Reservoir. These mountains and hills are seen to the best advantage on the Rock City Road near where the Cemetery begins. Wonderful views offer themselves here at sunset hours. If you look towards Bearsville, at the point where Horsetail Mountain ends, a long range of hills swings in a halfcircle to the left, at its end *The Ohio*. Behind these hills, commencing at the left, tops of the following mountains are seen: *High Point* and, looking to the right, *Ticetonyk*, then comes into view the original top of *Camelback Mountain*, then *Longneck* and, right behind Bearsville, *Sunset Mountain* and to the right of it *The Watchman*. These mountains are situated in the *Sunset Range*, ending with the Watchman, where the Horsetail and the Saddlebow Mountains begin.

I mention one more mountain of an odd shape. It can be seen from a spot near Rohland's house and has the round shape of a helmet. I call this treeclad mountain, which belongs to the Saddlebow Mountains, the *War Helmet*.

The wildernesses of these forestclad mountain regions are a paradise for hunters, who start at their sport in November. Game is plentiful. Racoons, porcupines, foxes, hares, rabbits, deer, bears are found. Of gamebirds there are partridges and grouse. Many of the mountainbrooks hold trout of good sizes, so the *Sawkill* and *Esopus Creek*. The season for trout begins in April.

Awakening in May

Morning Song. — By *W. Benignus*

The Lord with visage of shining light,
who dwells in realms afar,
has bathed in glories, golden and bright,
the Earth, his beautiful star.
The Sun, the victorious Orb of Day,
tints rosy each fleecy cloud,
and larks, that rise with a joyous lay,
:,: swing jubilant echoes about. :,:

The purple mountains, erect and awake,
greet proudly the brilliant azure,
reflect themselves in a mirrorlake
which shimmers like silver pure.
The morningbreeze whispers thru
forests green,
and meadowbrooks merrily run
where flowers, sparkling in dewpearls'
sheen,
:,:are opening their hearts to the Sun.:,:

A Visit to Alfeo Faggi

In appreciation of their genius dedicated to the sculptors
Hunt Diederich and *Alfeo Faggi*
and to their *talented and fair Soulmates*

The Sculptors Hunt Diederich and Alfeo Faggi.

A Visit to Faggis.

Woodstock Story No. 4 By William Benignus

During my stay in Woodstock, July, August, September, October 1920, I lived and worked as useful or handy man in the house of *Mr. Hunt Diederich*, cor. Main Street and Tannery Brook, helping out as a friend, for female help was as scarce that time as goldpebbles in the Catskill creeks. Diederichs were well liked in the village. *Noah Mower* said to me once, when I borrowed from him a grubaxe: "Diederich is a good neighbor. He can have anything from me."

Diederich, an American sculptor and designer of fame, was born on his father's landed estate in Hungary. At the age of 17 he came to America for the first time. From his mother's side he descends from one of the oldest and most distinguished American families. One of his ancestors, a *Hunt*, was U. S. State Governor.

Hunt Diederich's works, many in iron, some in bronze, are exceptionally expressive by the strength of their conception and the harmonious swing and movement of their curves and lines.

Diederich certainly is an artist of genius and a master of the line. He is a sharp observer of nature and loves to depict her in spirited actions and fighting moods, in attack and defense, in grapple, stroke and parry, in love and in hate, in earnest and in play. Horses, dogs, deer, fighting bulls, alone or with men, in hunt or in game or at play, are his favorite objects, also woman.

Diederich is of big build and powerful frame, while Faggi, his colleague in the art of sculpture, is a finely built man of medium size. Compared with Faggi, of whom I speak later, the mind-quality of his work is quite different from that of the latter. The two, in this respect, move in different directions, thereby reaching different heights or spheres. According to their natures they try for different goals. Diederich draws the stuff for his creations from the *material and sensual world*, Faggi finds the source for his inspirations in the *spiritual world*. Diederich prides himself on being material. No doubt of Diederich's sincerity in that respect, but I believe his real nature is not so badly material, for he is also a poet, and a good one.

Both sculptors are great artists in their own individual ways and characteristic styles. Both possess the nervous temperament, but while with Faggi it is controlled, with Diederich it occasionly breaks loose with volcanic impetuosity and impatience. Diederich's violent soul is that of a restless tempest, Faggi's sensitive soul is that of a clarified mountainbrook reflecting the serene deeps of a late summersky.

Mrs. Marie Hunt Diederich Anders was born, raised and educated in St. Petersburg. Her father was a Balt, her mother hails from Münich, Bavaria. Mrs. Diederich too, is an artist and is a good colorist. She is also a good linguist. And the best of all, she is good to everybody and a most devoted mother to her two darling children.

To the Diederichs on July the 10th, 1920, the day after I came to Woodstock,

a boy was born. The proud and lucky parents christened him after his grandfather *William Hunt Diederich.* He is a wonderful youngster, well formed and healthy, with big, expressive blue eyes. His sister of 4½ years, blonde, blue-eyed, selfwilled, gifted, pretty little *Kuku,*—Kuku is a pet name, her right name is *Sibyl Diederich*—, really a darling and dear, fell in love with her little brother at once when, two weeks later, her mother came home with him from the Benedictine Hospital in Kingston, N. Y. That time *Mrs. Sarah Livingstone-Mundhenk* and myself were conscientiously taking care of Diederich's household. Mrs. Mundhenk who is the wife of the sculptor *Oscar Mundhenk* had her little *Betty* with her, Kuku's affectionate playmate, being as big as Kuku but a few months younger. Mrs. Mundhenk left soon. She is happy now to call a little babygirl, *Ellen Livingstone-Mundhenk,* born the 29th of August 1920, her loveheart and heart's treasure. Mrs. Mundhenk is an excellent writer of *Children's Stories.*

To return to Diederich. The first American Exhibition of Sculpture by *Hunt Diederich* was held at the *Kingore Galleries,* 668 Fifth Avenue, New York, lasting from April the 20th until May the 12th, 1920. An introduction to this exhibition was written by *Christian Brinton.* I quote from it some professional considerations of Diederich, which throw a good light on his way of doing things. The sculptor says:

"Before beginning a piece of work I make up my mind precisely what I want to do, and then endeavor to catch my impression on the wing, as it were. I try to execute it at the moment when I see it most clearly and most completely, no matter where I may happen to be at the time. I first make a rapid sketch in wax, which I carry about for emergencies and thus have ready at hand. This sketch is small, as small as possible, so as to entail no waste of time or energy. I execute a quantity of these quick sketches, which I leave around the studio and turn to as I feel inclined. Those that seem vital and interesting I work into more permanent form, the rest I forget. I do a lot of small, decorative, and in a sense utilitarian things, for I believe that art should begin at the bottom, not the top. Art should be useful, should fulfill some specific end and purpose in our lives and homes. There can be as much aesthetic joy in making a candlestick or designing the leg of a table as in the treatment of the nude. Personally I like to work in as many different media as possible. Sculpture has been too long an affair of marble and bronze. It is too remote, too inaccessible. We must do everything possible to extend its scope and appeal, to insure for it a wider, more popular acceptance."

"My effort," he continues with enthusiasm, "tends toward the evolution of a distinctive style. When I have once perfected a definite style, and by style I do not mean mannerism, or even manner, I shall be ready to attack any given problem. Style is to me the crystallization of one's taste and one's convictions, and art without style is like a dog without breed. Success in art is, I think, more often than is generally supposed, a matter of how you begin. If you start a thing right, you are apt to finish it right, but if you start without faith or spirit, your work will always remain inert and lifeless. One should complete a piece of work with the same degree of enthusiasm one possesses at the outset. Pleasure in creation, in creative effort, is the touchstone of artistic achievement. A thing not done with pleasure is as dead as a thing done for mere duty."

On the evening of the 24th of September the Diederich's entertained as honored guests the Italian sculptor *Alfeo Faggi* and his wife *Beatrice.*

Following Mr. and Mrs. Faggi's invitation I wended my way, Saturday morning, Septemebr the 25th, at 11 a.m., from Woodstock uphill in the direction of "The Ohio", a hilltop, 1½ miles to the house of the Faggi's, doing quite a little sweating, for the day was as hot as a summerday and the air was filled with humid vapors as of coming rains. These rains came down in sheets Thursday, September the 30th and in the night to Friday, October the 1st, and swelled the brooks of the land around to unusual heights, but the morning of October the 1st, broke in a glory of sunshine, the atmosphere brightened and the old mountaingiants again lifted their forest-covered backs and heads sharply against a clear, blue sky. But to come back to September the 25th, I crossed two bridges, the first spanning the Tannery Brook and the second the clear, broad brook called the Sawkill. I passed soon, on the right side, an apple orchard where

golden and red apples in rich weight were bending every branch of the patient trees. The leaves of the maples along the road were already coloring bright yellow and everywhere scarlet and purple points of treetops and twigs announced the coming of frosty weather but also of the wonderful weeks of the American Indian summer. The road led now uphill. At the top of the long first hill I arrived after a brisk walk of about 25 minutes. There stood on the left side of the road a white house in country style, the house which I was seeking. I had the pleasure to find the artist and his charming wife at home. On the veranda Mrs. Faggi was in animated conversation with Mr. X. I was introduced to him. A few minutes later there arrived in an auto Mr. Y. and Mr. Z. The three are friends of the wellknown designer, author and poet *Hans Stengel*, a German, born in Wisconsin. Stengel served 1914 as officer in the German Army, was dismissed on account of ill-health and returned 1915 to the United States.

On account of his sympathies with the German people he was arrested in New York as a dangerous character by the U. S. Government, respectively by the Wilson Government, first sent to *Ellis Island* and with hundreds of poor wretches of German descent detained in the overcrowded and deadly unsanitary *hoggen for humans*. A good many of the men and women detained there and tortured, contracted deadly diseases and some of them died. After Stengel had tasted to the bottom the delights of this famous isle and contracted there tuberculosis, he was transfered to *Fort Oglethorpe* and interned during wartime. Interned with him in the same camp for the duration of the worldwar was also his friend, the German author and poet *Hanns Heinz Evers*. Their experiences at Fort Oglethorpe are a story by itself. Stengel spent the summer months of 1920 at Woodstock, where I made his personal acquaintance. He had a studio there at "The Allens", upon a hill from which a fine view of "Woodstock in the Valley" and of the Overlook Heights spreads out before the beholders. Stengel has done some very good portrait and landscape painting during his stay in Woodstock. Messrs. X, Y and Z soon said Goodbye and went ahead in their auto.

The Faggi house stands on a hilltop, and from there a fair panorama of the Eastern Catskills is seen, *Overlook Mountain* being the main feature. The old Giant stretches out strongly, his rocknose pointing east toward the Hudson. Far in the distance the blueing Connecticut Hills in mellow tints form the skyline.

Faggi's boy *Giovanni* was arduously playing close to the road in front of the house, a bright little fellow for whom I made later on some bows and arrows which I cut in the woods near by. Armed with these he courageously strolled out on a hunting expedition as a terrible Indian to go for bears with his fellow playmates in the neighborhood.

Some delightful hours I spent up there, a well of pure, cool water always near to quench the thirst. Mrs. Faggi, an accomplished composer of songs, played after lunch for me on the piano three of her own compositions, "Venician Boat Song", "Toscan Reapers" and a beautiful "Love Song", three musical gems of simple and perfect beauty and expression. They have not been published.

I am glad to have made that visit. Mr. Faggi soon led me across the road to his airy studio in a barn close by and showed me four of his latest creations which he had completed up here in Montana, as the group of scattered country houses of this neighborhood is called. Here he worked undisturbed.

I like his work. Faggi's art lifts us from the actual and material, from the world of hard facts to a spiritual world of ideals, golden dreams of his mind's creation. It impresses, but it must be studied thoughtfully to be fully appreciated.

His "*Madonna with Child*" represents the *mothersoul* splendidly. The execution of the two figures in bust, reminded me of an exalted Buddha,—thought brought to life in marble. A great Japanese artist and sage might have given it the same form. A longer study makes you admire the purity of this work, the sweetness, seriousness and depths of feeling of the mother's face and the loveliness of the child. For *love is the greatest thing in the world, and motherlove is the very greatest.* Ever as the supreme example we have *Mary, Mother of Christ.* She gave to the world her heart's best treasure, her son, the *Redeemer*, the *Man of Men.*

Purity of thought and spiritual profondity mark and characterize all of Mr. Faggi's works. These qualities come to light in his "*Eve*", a nude, upright, flowerlike, slender female figure whose lower limbs, at first sight, seem to be out of proportion to the upper parts of the body. The legs, up to the hips, are very long. Yet this strangeness disappears when you look at the figure as an embodied dream representing the loveseeking flowersoul of woman as a type, a slender and fair being, holding tenderly and gracefully in hands close to her finely shaped body the *symbol of fruitfulness*, the apple. To me the apple, instead of being a symbol of seductive sin, is a healthy symbol of fruitfulness and life productive.

A strong imaginative piece is the intellectual head, in bronze, of a *Thinker*, with the stern, pronounced features of a warrior and statesman.

The fourth piece, which captured me most and spoke to me a sympathetic language, was the head of the Japanese poet *Yone Naghugi*, who lives in Tokio. In this refined face of a philosopher and poet the best qualities of the great Chinese and Japanese races, nobliness and kindness of thought, concentration, meditation, inner contemplation and an aspiring spirit find expression. The pretension of some critics that Japanese art and religion are simply copied from the Chinese is, in my opinion, foundless. Japan, of course and naturally, has copied much from China, but has great original artists, philosophers, statesmen and warriors of her own by the plenty. But this is a question to discuss which belongs to another chapter.

It was 4 p. m. when I took leave from my kind hosts and walked down hill with the feeling of having gained an experience of pleasurable value.

Notice.—An exhibition of works of the sculptor *Alfeo Faggi* is held in New York City, commencing February the 19th and lasting till March the 19th, 1921.

Torajiro Watonabe

Into Hunt Diederich's Studio, where at Main Street the bridge spans the Tannery Brook, moved November 1, 1920, the Japanese artist *Torajiro Watonabe*. He is a gentlemanly, goodnatured fellow, obliging, kind, natural and very popular in the village. I like his enthusiastic soul, which appears mainly in his landscape paintings of Woodstock's surroundings, of which he painted many. There is nothing of the crazy art in them, they are live and show much strength and movement in color and execution. These are in oils. Watonabe paints also excellently in watercolors. In Woodstock we just call him Thomas.

Wm. Benignus.

Woodstock, Ulster Co., N. Y.,
Nov. 2, 1920.

The Old Man of the Mountain

He sleeps. The while the tempest storms,
his dream new worlds in brilliance forms.

When "Old Overlook" smokes

When *Old Overlook* smokes, watch out! it will rain soon.

Look there! the *Old Man* woke from sleep
and lit his Giant Pipe.
The clouds, at first like timid sheep,
now for a storm are ripe,
the smoke rolls down the mountainside,
rainspirits open the clouddoors wide.

The Overlook Mountains

Woodstock Story No. 5
By William Benignus

They are captivating, these mountains of the *Overlook Range*. Since ages they press downward with their weight upon their foundations. They are ever impressive,— in Winter, when white snowmantels cover their giantframes and reflect the sunlight in glittering brilliants, — in Spring, when the sprouting green of their forests restores them to joyous youth, — in Summer, when their vegetation blooms in fullness of strength and they lay stretched in dreamy meditation, — in Autumn, when they are dressed in the fairygarments of the fallwoods flaming colorharmonies and their souls are endowed with dreamvisions of incomparable beauty, at night over them the stargemmed sky, at day the hazy blue airsea with serenely sailing silverclouds.

The greatest attraction these mountains offer, when they announce coming rains or thunderstorms. Then watch "Old Overlook"! The old fellow is filling his pipe! By George, he has lit it and is smoking in company with his mountainpals! They are having a confab. They probably talk about the ages of the world, when the saltwaters covered them and they slowly rose out of the deeps, and are standing now, greeting sun and sky and are beloved by wild creatures and tame men. When at sunset the far mountains are glowing in purple they tell each other stories of the mysteries of distance and creation.

See, how white mists and grey mists sweep along the flanks of the mountains! The mountaingiants are enjoying a smoke.

When a thunderstorm brews or a strong rain is pending, then Old Overlook smokes madly. No more a haze or a mist mounts up, but a thick fog envelops and covers everything with its billows. The smoke from Old Overlook's big pipe mounts in clouds over his head, grows black and blacker and at last rolls down the mountain valleyward in the direction of Woodstock. The show generally is soon over. The sun appears, the refreshed land wakes up and basks in the sunshine.

The mountains present a magnificent spectacle when on sunny days the hastening clouds, lustrous winddriven wanderships of the skysea, sail thru the opal air and their fleeing shadows of changing tourmaline glide ghostlike over the crests and slopes of the broad giants below them.

Fairy Queen Elsa's Song:

The Silvery Moonbeams

The silvery moonbeams tremble
over the fields, and entrance.
Fairyland's folks assemble,
quaintly they play and they dance.
And I join, as one of their number,
their games and their singing so bright.
Flowers rock gently in slumber,
fragrances weave thru the night.

WILLIAM BENIGNUS

Catskill Mountains, near Woodstock, Ulster County, N. Y.

"While in hot summerdays the mountainspirits of the Overlook Range sent down cool breaths of wind and golden floods of sunrays electrified the blood, I cleared with brushcutter and sickle the autoroad and the forestpaths bothsides on Rohland's place and made them look like boulevards and their surroundings like little parks."

Rohland's Oak

Woodstock Story No. 6
By William Benignus

Some of the loveliest parts of Woodstock's attractive surroundings are the wooded hills of Paul Rohland's 32 acre estate on which his house is standing. I was engaged by him to weed and hoe and cultivate his vegetable garden and to broaden and make free of bushes and hindering trees the autoroad which leads from the State Road uphill to his residence and studio, also to clear of overcrowding alderbushes the footpath which leads from his residence downhill to Bearsville, also to cut a path to his newly erected bungalow where the artists Bradley and Camp lived and to put on a pile the timber and boards and cart away with a wheelbarrow the rubbish laying around, also to make a little park out of a densely overgrown forestgrove near his dwelling. The work just suited me. Armed with brushcutter and sickle I went to work with zeal and finished the jobs satisfactorily in a period of about 6 weeks. To have a pleasant souvenir of this I asked Mr. Rohland to kindly write a few lines of reference. They follow here:

"*To whom it may concern.*—This testifies that Mr. Wm. Benignus has worked for me during the summer of 1920. He kept in good order my vegetable garden and did excellent landscape gardening, clearing, broadening and making paths and trimming trees and keeping the grounds about the house in good condition. His work has been very satisfactory and I find him a reliable person to do business with."

Paul Rohland.

Bearsville, Ulster Co., N. Y.

This was during the months of August and September. The weather was fine. It rained seldom. Often I walked from Woodstock the 1½ miles to the place, often a passing auto took me along friendlylike and saved me the time to and fro. I describe here my promenading, because it is such a pleasant remembrance: I always took my lunch along and started from Diederich's House. After crossing the Tannery Brook bridge the State Road leads straight ahead toward Bearsville. Near the "Little Art Shop" the Meadow Brook bridge is crossed, at the end of the village comes another little bridge. The road leads on, Ohio Hill to the left, the Overlook Mountains to the right, till you come, a few minutes from Bearsville, to the third little sideroad leading to the right. On this soon uphill you go, quite steep. First you pass the *Finey Brothers'* new bungalow and studio. They own 3 acres of woodland there. *Ernst* is a painter, *Paul* a sculptor, both excellent artists who take work seriously. You come to Rohland's estate. To the right lived *Bradley* and *Camp*. Then comes the garage, then a studio building where *Leon Kroll* worked on some great paintings, then *Mr. and Mrs. Rohland's* house and studio and their admirable flowergarden, then the flowersurrounded fairyhouse of the composer of some of my songs, the genius *Eugen Haile*. A number of bungalows and studios, where other artists reside, are ahead and around. *Miss Agnes Tait*, the New York artist and illustrator camped up there in the woods on Rohland's place during August and the first week of September. To her generosity I owe the portrait illustrating this story. The drawing of the soaring eagle I owe to the kindness of the New York artist and illustrator *Henry Nappenbach*.

The hill country up there is ideal. Lacking are brooks and wells. A sorry sight in the woods are the giant chestnut trees. They are dead, leafless skeletons. A mysterious sickness has killed these trees all over the U. S. Their wood burns up quickly and brightly in the stove, but gives very little heat. Many sprucetrees and firs up there also look dead, their needleleaves redbrown like rust. This is the work of the spruce budworm, who has caused such wastage in the State of Maine, where 25 per cent., with a high figure of 60 per cent., of all the fir growth in the State has been killed, with considerable spruce destruction as well.

A good many summach trees, wild cherry trees, elderberry bushes, some juniper bushes, especially many alderbushes in groves, birches, nuttrees, oaks, sprucetrees, hemlocks, firs, maples and American linden trees grow on these hills. Wild appletrees I found in many places.

The uphill road to Rohland's, as far as Haile's house, offers splendid views of the Catskill Mountains, to the right, and the Ohio Hill country, to the left.

Where the road commences to run evenly toward the garage, you come at the bend to *a great oak*. The stately tree stands at a corner of a hillmeadow. Under its circling shady bower grow up young cedars and pines, one or the other already reaching up to the oak's big leafroof. I like that oak. Fine trees are good company. They are as good company as noble horses or faithful dogs. They can not run and gambol with you, but they stay with you in memory and brighten your dreams. I give my oak its name, *Rohland's Ook*. I measured the tree's dimensions. The straight round trunk up to a height of 11 feet has a circumference of 12 feet. There it branches and reaches, from the roots to the crown, a height of 45 feet. At the branching point the boughs surround the trunk in a circle like spokes of a giant wheel, the lower branches having a length of 55 feet; they form a great leafy cupola. The roots do not show above ground. The bark of the tree is hard as rock and covered with a whiteishgreen lichen. It is deeply furrowed. My inquiry regarding the tree was kindly answered by *Mr. H. A. Gleason*, Assistant Director at the Bronx Botanical Garden, New York City, who gave me this information:

New York Botanical Garden,
Bronx Park, New York City,
October 22, 1920.

Mr. William Benignus,
Woodstock, Ulster Co., N. Y.

Dear Sir:—

Replying to your recent inquiry, I beg to say that the oak tree, leaves of which you submitted to us, is the *Red Oak, Quercus rubra*. This is a native of the Northeastern States and is one of our largest species of oaks. For a tree 12 feet in circumference it is likely that the age may be as much as *300 years*.

The growth upon the bark of the tree is a *lichen, Parmelia caperata*.

Very truly yours,

H. A. Gleason,
Assistant Director.

I looked, November the 4th, for fresh acorns on the ground, but found only a few old rotten ones, some loose, some still in their big cups. Brown leaves of the tree strewed the ground already. I received a more accurate description of the acorns from the "United States Department of Agriculture":

Washington, D. C.,
November 11, 1920.

The Forester, R. S.,
Distribution Identification.

Mr. Wm. Benignus, Box 61,
Woodstock, Ulster Co., N. Y.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of November 1, and specimens, with accompanying descriptive notes dated November 7, are received. The acorns confirm the previous identification of the tree as *Red Oak*, Quercus rubra L. This oak bears an ovate or oval shaped acorn retained at the base and set in a thick, shallow, saucer-shaped cup.

Joseph Kittiedge, Jr.

Acting Chief of Forest Investigations.

Rohland's Oak, this majestic tree of noble stature and robust growth, stands like a part of the mountains themselves, stands like them in grand poise, defies with them the storms and challenges the seasons. The mountains outlast it, for mountaintime, treetime and mentime are not the same.

From a small acorn it grew, took root in the mothercarth, stood upright, firm, fixed, stable, worked silenty, patiently, rose high and higher, broad and broader, strong and stronger till it reached its present height and stoutness.

This took time. But the treesoul had faith in the Force Who Knows. It waited, it loved the spot given it to live, to grow, to be what it is now, *a monarch in the solitude of the surrounding country*.

This tree, 300 years old, has seen much happening near him: Indians, palefaces, wild animals, fierce fights and stormy hours and also peaceful days and doings. This oak, drawing from the native ground the strength to brave all storms and weathers, gives us the lesson: "Have personality, individuality!

Be yourself! Dont let yourself be suppressed! Your soul is your own and God's only. Do right! With a clean conscience stand upright, firm, fearless, straight and strong, and look the world squarely in the face. Don't hurry and don't worry! Concentrate energy, reserve power, gather vitality. Only deficiency hurries. Think your tasks out, then do them systematically and thoroly, one at a time. Build on solid foundations. *Steady! Have faith, soul! Have faith! Hold fast!*"

Another lesson the great oak gives us. When the wind blows thru its bower, with its leavevoices it whispers: "I am but a tree. Where the Master of Fate put me and ordered me to stand, there I root. But you are humans and not trees. You have feet and hands and muscles and nerves and minds to move and act and do things. Dont stand still! Be active! *Move on, forward, upward, lightward.*"

Remark.—The picture of this oak is from a pen and ink drawing by P. Staiger, Stuttgart, who also drew the picture of the *Mountain Lake*, which represents the *Ebnisee*, near Welzheim.

The picture here is that of the "*Bocksеiche*" or "*Bucks Oak*", near Welzheim, a small city in an alpine region of Württemburg, Germany, which is covered by magnificient forests of hemlocks, pines, firs, oaks and beeches. These forests belong to the "Black Forest" of Württemberg. Over a great area of this forest my grandfather, *Wilhelm Benignus, Stadtförster in Schorndorf im Remstal*, was warden and chief forester. When I was a boy in Welzheim, 2 German miles up the mountain, I often visited him in Schorndorf, where he lived on pension in his old age with his daughter Marie, my good aunt. In his 80th year his eyesight gave out, but he still took his accustomed walks alone, his big walkingstick in his hand. He was a giant in stature. I can still see him in his rustbrown coat walking along on his promenades with mighty strides. His father, my great grandfather, was chief geometrician or land surveyor of Württemberg. My grandfather died 1870 at the age of 82 years and is interred with his wife, a descendant of the noble family of the *v. Kaltwassers* in Silesia, in the city cemetery of Schorndorf. My father, *Reallehrer and Turnlehrer Wilhelm Benignus*, died 1875 in Schorndorf and is buried near his parents.

This big German oak, the Bockseiche, near Welzheim, I admired during my boyhood days whenever I strolled thru the wonderwoods there. The name *Bucks Oak* was given to the tree, because the bucks of the wild deer, numerous there, used to rub their horns on the hard bark. The oak is of about the same thickness, height and shape as "Rohland's Oak", as the picture here shows it. It stands dominatingly on a hillplateau and is, like the American oak, 300 years old.

A great White Ash

Where Main Street makes a bend and leads straight on toward Bearsville a bridge spans Tannery Brook. Close to the street near the bend at the northwest corner of Hunt Diederich's house there stands on his ground a great *White Ash Tree.* I measured its dimensions. The circumference of the trunk up to a height of 15 feet is 9 feet, 5½ inches. Up to this height the round trunk is evenly formed, then it branches. The tree's entire height is 55 feet. The bark is of dark grey color, is wavily furrowed, and the vertical streaks of the bark, from 1 to 2 inches broad, are covered with the whitish green lichen *Parmelia caperata.*

Mr. H. A. Gleason, Assistant Director of the "New York Botanical Garden", Bronx Park, gave me the information (letter of November 4, 1920) that these trees grow quite rapidly, and while it is very difficult to make estimates as to their age, the tree probably is *150 years old.* It is a native American tree found commonly thruout the Eastern United States and is usually considered indicative of a rich soil. Its latin name is *Fraxinus americana.*

Wm. Benignus.

Be glad

Time,—it includes much. It seems to consist of intervals, yet flows along unbroken and steadily. It sees the birth and death of stars and universes, rushes on with mighty wings to unknown destinations. Nobody and nothing can stop it.

We humans measure only some of its smallest intervals, such as mountaintime, treetime, mentime. Their times are not the same. Men wither, trees fall into decay, even mountains become weary with age. They all vanish. Nothing earthly lasts. Everything on earth has a beginning, endures for a while, lives, loves, enjoys, suffers, passes, has an end. And that is good, good as God, in whose Eternity hoary Time is swallowed up.

Forms, which Spirit takes, are changing. "Perishable" is written on the loaded cars of the freights and express trains for Eternity. Let not this dishearten you, pilgrims! Be not discouraged, souls! We all reach the City of Pearls, 'tho many of us very much battered and broken up from rough handling and cruel bumping on the journey. Be assured, we will have glorified bodies, stronger, more durable and suitable for work, of unassailable health, transfigured, more beautiful. Virtue our inborn nature. I greet you, noble spirits, congenial associates! Our surroundings no more repulsive, hindering, injurious, and the poisonous, noxious, nasty smells of the Earth with her overcrowded, noisy, dustfilled cities no more insulting our senses.

Be glad, travelers! Thou glorious light! Thou golden morning! Resurrection! It is a fine thing to rise refreshed and strengthened at the break of a new day, to begin over again and do better, till we are perfect in the perfectness of the everlasting Spirit.

William Benignus.

Time flies

Night of October the 8th to 9th, 1920

The Spring, so young,
the Summer, strong
with life that ripens fast,
are gone. Autumn
with weaker sun
is here, not long to last.

The Katydids,
like playing Kids,
drum lustily nearby:
"Katy did!" "Katy didnt!"
"Katy did!" "Katy didnt!"
Time is not far
when, each a star,
snowflakes begin to fly.

The Bald Eagle

Our Country's Bold Emblem

A Poem dedicated to the Eagle's Defenders:

Col. Henry W. Shoemaker, Poet, Historian, Collector and Recorder of Legends and Folk-lore of Central Pensylvania.
Dr. W. T. Hornaday, brilliant writer on wild life topics and able conservationist.
John H. Chatham, the "John Burroughs of the Pennsylvania Mountains".
Professor Garrett P. Serviss, the eminent Astronomer and Savant of Nature.

FREEDOM! a grand and sacred name,
ever dear to you and me.
You cannot put her in a frame,
she is grand as air and sea!
We Freemen rise at her command
when her strong voice is heard,
she guards with fiery torch the land
whose emblem is a bird.

Look! Do you see that bird sedate
outlined against the sky?
In majesty an eagle great
in cloudland climbing high!
The Light its love, the Sun its bliss.
Aye, FREEDOM,—sacred name!—,
embodied by this EAGLE is,
OUR COUNTRY'S BOLD EMBLEM!

Some judges in Alaska willed
to chase the eagles hence,
they pay there for an eagle killed,
a carcass, fifty cents.
5000 in a single year,
in 1917,
were slaughtered thus, so we did hear,
wherever they were seen.

Alaska is the bird's last home,
none other find it may.
Well, even if it's troublesome
to farmers, let it stay!
Don't chase and kill this spirit free,
our Country's bold emblem,
else Freedom, dear to you and me,
will soon be—but a name.

W. Benignus.

Good to hear

NEW LONDON, Conn., Dec. 3, 1920.—A young bald eagle, unexpectedly caught in a trap, is being nursed back to health from its injuries by John Whittle, of Mystic, who follows trapping as a fad.

The bird was not badly hurt, and, after considerable difficulty, was taken by Mr. Whittle to his home, where it is confined in a coop until its injuries are repaired, after which the eagle will be liberated. The bird is a fine specimen, having a wing spread of over fifty inches.

By two Oceans guarded

Words for a *National Song.* — By *William Benignus*

Sincerely dedicated to

President-elect Warren G. Harding,

who will endeavor to be

"on the square with all the American people".

Music to be simple, but powerful and victorious, brisk with enthusiasm. To be sung by single voice or great chorus.

By two Oceans guarded, as by God's own hand,
basks in peace and plenty our beloved land.
Kind to every nation on this whole wide Earth,
thus we rest securely, God's great blessings worth.

Helpers, when the others are in sore distress,
let us be forever, let us *give* and *bless.*
For we are God's Children, Children of the Light,
grateful that He guards us with two Oceans' might.

But if enemies threaten, plotting to attack,
let us wield our weapons, shield our breast and back;
manfully we battle, strive by land and sea
to defend our Country's sacred liberty.

Wave, *Starspangled Banner,* over our fighters' throng!
E Pluribus Unum is our Motto strong!
Lead us, glorious banner, lead to victory!
Wave in winds of heaven over people free!

An Eagle soars

An Eagle soars with majestic flight
over mountaintops in the morninglight,
his cry rings loud in ecstacy,
he mounts in spirals, sunward, free.

Camping in the Mountainwoods

Dedicated in a free spirit to *"Romany Mary"*

I slept in the woods in a tent alone,
when the wind flapped high the side,
the stars they glistened and glittered and shone
in the skysea deep and wide,
and they all seemed so sure their way to find,
for their Admiral Grand was the Mastermind.

A wild fox cried in the forestdepth,
a porcupine grunted near,
an owl, as if a lost soul wept,
its spectral voice let hear,
and my heart was happy and I felt fine
as if I had drunk God's nectarwine.

Westwindclouds and Sunrays playing on the Overlook Mountains

Grey clouds were moving overhead,
suppliers of life's fountains,
throwing their shadows down in glad
fast sweeps upon the mountains,
when suddenly the sunrays broke
thru them, as with a swordblade's stroke,
and, joy!, of golden light a patch,
that seemed a running deer to catch
or some grand game upon behests,
hushed over the mountains' heads and breasts.

Afternoon of October 20, 1920.

White Mists joining Grey Clouds

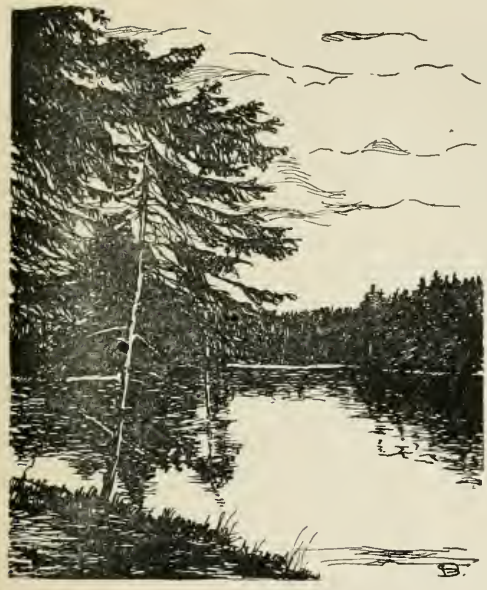
Just see! How grandly mists arise!
They are waterspirits, as I surmise.
Between *Mead's Mountain* and *Overlook*,
from ravines, where their birth they took,
they stretch long arms up to the sky,
where slowly fields of clouds pass by
who pull them up from the forestgreen
till only two more shapes are seen,
two snowwhite ones. High up they reach,
and arms stretch down from the clouds' airbeach.
Up, up they go!, in the grey are lost,
they have joined the wandering clouds great host.

The Mountainlake

Evening Song. — By *William Benignus*

Sincerely dedicated to

Senator Joseph Irwin France, of Maryland



On silent heights a lake, adream,
reflects the parting light,
the mountaintops in splendor gleam
like fiery gold so bright.
A little songbird sings its best
of perfect peace and sweetest rest.

To darkening woods the breezes roam,
hide with a sighing sound,
the world below the starry dome
to sleep drops all around.
Like angelgreeting, far away,
the songbird sings its peaceful lay.

Joseph Irwin France, Maryland,
Chairman.

United States Senate,
Committee on
Public Health & National Quarantine

July 20, 1920

Mr. Wilhelm Benignus,
330 E. 69th Str., N. Y. City.

My dear Mr. Benignus:

Upon return to my office after a much-needed vaction and rest following the adjournment of Congress and the Chicago convention, I am very pleased to find your letters of the 2nd and 6th awaiting me here.

The beautiful postcard portraying your "heart's wish for years", the natural and picturesque "Shawangunk Mountain Stories", and the idealistic songs which you enclosed I highly appreciate. All these help me to understand your letters better, and make me feel that the love of the great out-of-doors, where truest freedom dwells, is really the guiding impulse of your life.

I want to tell you how much I enjoyed *"The Mountain Lake"*, the evening song which you honor me by dedicating to my name. Its lines breathe of the coolness of the dark forests, and the mountain waters, and is very refreshing to read on a hot summer's day in Washington. To my judgment, your choice of words is most beautiful and onomatopoetic.

Personally, I shall support the Republican ticket, as I feel that under the administration of Harding and Coolidge, which now seems assured, the liberties of the people will be much more faithfully preserved than they have been under the present administration.

Yours sincerely,

Signed: *Jos. I. France*

PDH

The Fairy of the Tigerlilies

To the Painting by *Agnes Tait*
"Rohland's Camp", Bearsville, Ulster Co., N. Y., August 1920

Sonnet. — By *William Benignus*

The greenwoods slumber and the Catskills dream.
The mountaingiants with their soft contours
soon are enwrapped in mist's or rain's velours,
soon in clear skies their heights in splendor gleam.

A *Fairy* dwells here, where sweet peace allures.
Her wistful eyes of brown like deep pools seem,
upon whose surfaces the sunrays beam
and dip and dive for beauty which endures

Wild *Tigerlilies* grow abundant there,
and mystic powers and witchery everywhere
enfold the wanderer and take hold of him.

The world's fierce turmoil echoes here but dim.
The Catskills dream, the greenwoods are ahush,
its perfect lay sings goldenly a thrush.

Song of the Errand Knight

Oft I wandered thru valleys
where horrors engulfed and night,
grimly advanced against me
Destruction and deadly Fright.

Ghosts of the abyss threatened,
gnashed their gleaming teeth,
hellworms and snakes were hissing,
crawling before my feet.

Fierce fiends were lurking,
their staring eyes hatefully glowed,
silent, purepurposed and steady,
not minding them on I rode.

Schlaf wohl, mein Brüderlein!

"Was ist das Menschenleben?
Kämpfen, Leiden und Sterben!"

Mein Bruder *Dr. Siegfried Emil Benignus*, geb. in Heilbronn am Neckar, 1865, war Forschungsreisender und zuletzt Lehrer an der Berliner Handelsschule. Durch Entbehrungen während des Kriegs widerstandsunfähig gemacht, raffte ihn eine tückische Krankheit nach dreitägigem Ringen und Leiden am 8. Juli 1918 dahin. Er ist auf dem Berliner Sophienfriedhof, in der Bergstrasse, beerdigt.

Schlaf wohl, mein Brüderlein!
Du gingst zur Ruhe ein.
Ruh sanft, du tapfer Streiter!
Ich kämpf in Treue noch,
in Not und Stürmen heiter
halt ich Schönheit und Freiheit hoch.
Wir lebten und wir liebten
in Jahren, die verfahlt,
gar viel von Leid durchsiebten,
doch auch goldlichtdurchstrahlt.

Schlaf wohl, mein Brüderlein!
Ach, mein Herzbrüderlein!
Eya, mein Herz möcht brechen,
wenn ich an dich denk,
drin ist's wie scharfes Stechen,
wenn ich an dich denk.
Die Tränen rinnen mir nieder
heiss und ungezählt.
Schlaf wohl! Wir sehn uns wieder
in einer andern Welt.

Meines Bruders Werk liegt auf in der "New York Public Library", 5. Ave. und 42. Street: *"In Chile, Patagonien und auf Feuerland". Ergebnisse mehrjähriger Studien und Reisen.* Von *Dr. Siegfried Benignus.* — Verlag G. Reimer, Berlin, 1912.

Ein Adler schwebt

Ein Adler schwebt im Morgenlicht,
das Gold um die Kuppen der Berge flicht,
er grüsst das Leuchten mit schrillem Schrei,
in Spiralen steigt er, sonnenwärts, frei.

O du glänzendes Licht!

Siehst du, wie herrlich der Morgen anbricht?
O du glänzendes Licht, du seliges Licht!
In Erkenntnis erwache! Im göttlichen Glauben
schwing dich adlergleich auf aus dem irdischen Stauben!

By own experiences only

Man gains wisdom and knowledge by *own* experiences only. To gain superior knowledge he must struggle with *his own self*, like Jacob with the Angel. He must go thru purgatories of earthly existence before *he finds himself* and knows who and what *God* is, and before he finds God, the Spirit of Spirits, who is Life and Love.

Your Fate? *You* are your Fate. Your Future? *You* are your Future. Fate is inexorable. *Love* and *Mercy* are the Godspirits of your salvation.

Prayer

Prayer, in concentration of thought, is "communion of your soul with your Self and with God", thereby finding your higher Self and cleansing your soul from things earthly. Your task and endeavor shall be to verify this in life and work, thus making life and work a confirmation of prayer.

If *I* am, *God* is. If *God* is, *I* am. There shall be no slavery and mastery between Man and God, there must be unity.

Stormswept Forest

I wandered thru a stormswept forest,
the treetops reeled, fast rocked the bower,
the stormcalls in the rocking forest
rang loud, like calls from watchman's tower.

The grand treevoices swelled the chorus
while fierce in haste the storm rushed by,
like organpeals the mighty chorus
of myriad voices swelled on high.

I listened, silently responding,
and felt my soul on wings arise,
I heard the royal palms responding
in paradise, in paradise.

William Benignus

From photo, copyright by Louis E. Jones, by permission

In the Catskills, Woodstock, Ulster Co., N. Y.

The great Ashokan Reservoir receives its supply of pure water from these Catskill Mountain Ranges.

A Trip around the Ashokan Reservoir

Woodstock Story No. 7
By William Benignus

The Ashokan Reservoir can easily be approached by excellent highways via Kingston, Saugerties and Woodsock. It can be reached from Kingston by the New State Road, from Saugerties by the Saugerties Road and from Woodstock in the opposite direction by the same Saugerties Road which branches off to the right towards the Reservoir at the "Saugerties Hotel".

From *Woodstock* the *Ashokan Reservoir* can also be reached by the highway which leads thru the villages *Bearsville, Shady* and *Mount Tremper* in a big, winding detour.

Sunday, October the 24th, 1920, was an Indian Summer Day of perfect beauty. A note was brought to me by Agnes and Hans, the children of my friend Eugen Schleicher:

"Lieber Herr Benignus.—Ich habe also das Automobil bestellt und wird es halb 2 Uhr (half past one) da sein. Machen Sie sich also um diese Zeit sprungbereit." —Eu. Schleicher.

Mr. Schleicher himself could not go, because little Carl, his youngest child, was not quite well and he had to stay at home with him. I was ready at the right time and we started, a party of expectant people: *Mrs. Minna Schleicher* with her children *Agnes and Hans, Mr. Eugen Haile,* the musical genius and composer of songs and operas, with his wife *Elise* and, not to forget, their pet dog, elegant deerbrown *Bobby,* at 2 p.m.

from Woodstock in one of *Mr. Longyears* autos, the chauffeur par excellence being *Mr. Richard Reynolds*. He did not know that he had in his auto quite distinguished passengers. It was a genuine load of Schwaben which he took along on this their memorable pleasuretrip, for Mrs. Schleicher, a sister of the composer Haile, hails from Ulm, Württemberg, a city at the renowned river Donau and well known by its "Ulmer-Münster" and the "Schneider von Ulm", also by its "Spatzen" of which there are different kinds. Ulmer Spatzen are also Mr. Schleicher and Mr. and Mrs. Haile, while I do not deny to hail from Heilbronn-am-Neckar, where a good many people have red noses from the tasty wine there which is called "Heilbronner".

On the straight highway we rode to Bearsville, crossed the Sawkill Bridge to the left, then turned to the right towards Shady, the village, where we arrived soon. From Shady a road leads to *Pine Hill*, 23 miles distant, where the New York silk merchant *Mr. Theodore Michel* owns a large tract of hillcountry, on his estate being many fine summerhouses and bungalows for the comfort of Catskill Visitors during the warm season.

On we swung in a big bow, passed Lake Hill Village, then Willow Village to the right, then Mount Tremper Village, crossed the Esopus Bridge, came soon to the Reservoir, autoed across the *Million Dollar Bridge*, swung to the *Dam* and to the *Aerating Plant*, rode a long while on the *Ashokan Boulevard*, the Reservoir always to our left, swung towards the Kingston Road, came to *West Hurley*, at the New State Road, swung to the right into the Woodstock Road, came into the Saugerties Road opposite the Saugerties Hotel and were, in a few minutes, back in Woodstock at 5 p. m.

This roundtrip from Woodstock thru Shady and farther on was delightfully picturesque. Forest- and meadowbrooks ran with busy efficacy merrily over their pebbly and rockstrewn beds, soon to the left, soon to the right of the road which the auto took smoothly and quickly.

The rural land, till we came to Tremper, was attractively interesting, but naturally by its mountainous character and rocky ground it is poor for grainfarming and better suited for pastoring of cattle, sheep and goats.

The blithe, exhilarating sunwarm air of this Indian Summer Day made living a delight. On quiet pools of the numerous creeks and brooks floated in golden patches fallen leaves. On appletrees near the road, all their leaves dropped glowed on the loaden branches their paradisal fruits in rose, carmine and sunyellow. Clumps of elderberry bushes, fringing the byways, still bore their black berries. In front of a pretty little white cottage a rowantree, bare of leaves, decoratively displayed its scarlet berrybunches to us.

Graceful Cosmos were shining on long slender stems, white ones and lilac ones, the starflowers of autumn,—alas! they wither in the first frost. Chrysanthemums bloomed princely fair, the queenflowers of the fallseason, that easily stand the first and second frost. The tonic of the summer was ended. The tunes rang out in a final cadence of drenching sweetness and glory.

Those shady, peaceruled forestlanes! and the open stretches with the Catskill Mountains ever visible, protecting the valleys at their feet. One of the most lovely scenes on such an open stretch offers the valley of *Willow Village*, its houses like playthings scattered in the green, its little white church with the typical tower ever prominent and inviting, while behind, outlined against the sky, the mountains in a solid row rear up their masses. Autos, filled with sightseeing tourists, passed us to and fro, seldom a horseteam.

As we rushed by, to both sides of the road desirably situated summerhouses, bungalows, cottages, camps showed up. One of these dwellings was so pretty that it evoked from Haile the ejaculation: "Gucket amol do, Elies und Benignus! Gucket amol do! Ischt dees a netts Häusle am a Bächle dort! So eins hätt i gern!" "I au!"—I replied. As we neared Tremper a jolly party of picknickers, just starting at their luncheon, spread in the open upon a table covered with a white tablecloth in front of a cottage, waved us friendly greetings and Bobby replied to their "Hoohoos!" with his original "Wow! Wow! Wow!" Young athletic folks wer playing cricket on the lawn near a big boardinghouse, a young lady watching them, her rich hair like waves of silken fire framing her winning face. Just before we reached Tremper the road branched off

towards the right to Pine Hill. Haile, always of a humorous turn of mind, here let loose the classical remark: "Maybe, by and by, it will be all right. We come soon now to the Reservoir." Whereupon Mrs. Schleicher in surprise approbriately replied: "Jo, hör!" And the writer of this story sighed resignedly: "O God!" And again he sighed, kind of astonished: "O Lord!" Mr. Schleicher told me later on that I *did* say so. I could hardly believe it. Without his pointed hint I wouldn't have even "know'd" it. Later on, when I related this conversation to Mrs. Marishka Diederich, she commented hastily upon it with: "Grossartig! But its all perfectly comical! Everything is comical! The whole world is comical!"

Well, we kept straight on, the broad, evenly running *Esopus Brook* or *Esopus Creek* to our right. Oh you mountainbrooks, how my heart loves you! On this day the waters of the brook ran, scarcely high 2 feet, in rippling quick foaming wavelets over their pebbly bed. A few turns of the wheels and on the outskirts of Tremper we crossed the low *Esopus Bridge*, and soon, as Haile had presaged, the azureblue mirroring waters of the Ashokan Reservoir shimmered to our left in the sunlight and we entered the realms of fairie and of perpetual youth.

We came to the famous *Million Dollar Bridge*, properly called *Tavern Hollow Bridge*, for it is built high over the *Tavern Hollow Creek*. This concrete bridge is a modern architectural wonder. Our auto stopped in the middle of the bridge and we stepped out and looked over both banisters down into the deep chasm at whose bottom, 200 feet below, the Tavern Hollow Creek winds dreamily to its destination, adding its flood to the big basin. High forest trees, rising upon the inclined ground to both sides of the brook, glowed in the glorious tints of autumn, their tops, touching in close proximity so far below us, forming a colororchestra that sang symphonically with tongues of flame the final chord of the year's beauty.

After we had passed the Million Dollar Bridge an incomparably impressive panorama of the *Catskill Mountains* to our right opened upon our sight. In a halfcircle these powerful giants guarded the waters of the big basin. Opposite them, across the basin, another long range of mountains rose, the same that ended at Woodstock with *Overlook Mountain*. How powerful these forestcovered giants looked! So proudly they held up their round heads to the glorious afternoonsky.

Here they reposed, circling the valleys, placed at their posts like soldiers on duty by the magician Time. In cosmic grandeur the mighty fellows rested. But even while resting they were active for the good of men and many creatures, from their vast, benevolent hearts ever streaming the lifefluid *Water*, whose restless, ever wandering, ever changing spirits appear to us as brooks, rivers, lakes, oceans, mists, clouds.

Here they reposed and rested, massive, imposing, these Giants of the Ages. One mighty Titan in the front won my special admiration. Grandly on watch, a guardian of the passes, he lay there with his heavy weight. He guards the inroads to this fairyland of New York State, where wondrous portals open wide. It seems to me as if many wonders and treasures of all kinds can be found by adventourous souls daring to invade and explore these enchanted regions, which now, in the light of the sinking sun, were bathed in a fine, pearly aerial haze, as if covered by a transparent silverveil which the Spirits of Evening had tenderly dropped on them.

We went ahead leisurely, came to the Ashokan Bridge and stopped at the *Aerating Plant*, with *Aerator* and *Screen Chamber*. Here the waters, before being allowed to flow to New York City, compressed and ejected in a cleansing process gush up and pearl in fairy fountains, mount and sink in fine, snowwhite showers continually, while a curving rainbow, created by the sunrays, beautifies their unceasing, active work and fascinating play.

The road from there to Woodstock, while the Reservoir and the Mountains across were ever to our left, offered many fine views, till while we neared Woodstock, one of my best beloved, the *Overlook Range*, came in sight. It was not long till we autoed into Main Street, turned into the Rock City Road and ended our enjoyable roundtrip in front of Mr. Schleicher's house.

The Ashokan Reservoir and the Catskill Mountain Acqueduct

Ashokan is an Indian name and signifies *Place of Fish.*

The great *Ashokan Reservoir* receives its waters thru creeks or brooks which flow from the breasts of the surrounding mountains of the Catskill Range, open toward Kingston, N. Y. To name a few: *Wittenburg, Cornell* and *Slide Mountains, High Point, South Mountain, Torrens Hook, Mount Ticetonyk* and *Little Tontshi*, the latter three visible from the Ashokan Bridge over the Dividing Weir, *Indian Head, Round Top, Mead's Mountain* or *"The Sentinel"* and *Overlook Mountain*, these ltater two be longing to the Overlook Range, at whose foot the villages *Bearsville, Woodstock* with *Rock City* and *Birdcliff, Saugerties* and, farther off, *West Hurley*, and *Maeverick* are situated, while *Overlook Mountain*, farthest east, points its rocky nose towards the Hudson River.

The *Ashokan Reservoir*, which supplies New York City with pure water, is 610 feet above sea level. A forty-mile highway or parkway encircles the Reservoir, which is 12 miles long and 3 miles wide and holds 120,000,000 gallons. The shore line is 40 miles, with 10 concrete bridges, amongst them the *Ashokan Bridge*, which crosses the Reservoir at the dividing weir, is 1,120 feet long and has 15 arches of 67,5 span. Chief Engineer is I. Waldo Smith. Another one of these 10 bridges is the *Esopus Bridge*, under which the *Esopus Creek* flows toward the Dam. The view above the Ashokan Reservoir with the bridge in front, is one of the fairest. When touring around the Reservoir it is worth while to stop on the *Million Dollar Bridge*, or better called *Tavern Hollow Bridge*. Far below, 200 feet, thru the hollow or chasm flows the *Tavern Hollow Creek*. Worth to be seen are the *Olive Bridge Dam*, showing *Esopus Canyon*, and a look over the *Spillway* of the Reservoir, where the surplus water runs off.

The water, before it leaves the Reservoir, is cleansed by an *Acreator*. Thru 1600 nozzles it is thrown into the air in a fine spray, taking up an admixture of oxygen from the atmosphere, while unhealthy gases and undesirable material are removed.

Four creeks constitute the main sources of the water supply: The *Esopus, Rondout, Schoharie* and *Catskill*. The total area of the entire watershed is over 900 square miles. The water area is 8,100 acres, maximum depth 190 feet, average depth 50 feet. The city owns 15,222 acres. The supply in Catskill water to New York City is about 500,000,000 gallons daily, which flow to the city thru the big main, a distance of 120 miles. On the way four large lakes are formed, filled with the purest water.

From its height in the mountains the conduit sinks under the rivers to a depth of 1114 feet below the sea, breaks thru the solid rock of Manhattan Island and distributes the precious water in abundance to every dwelling of New York City. The natural pressure lifts the water to the 12th story. It was necessary to bore the tunnel under the city thru solid rock to a depth of 300 to 800 feet. The cost of the great *Ashokan Reservoir* was $30,000,000. The cost of the whole, *Catskill system*, including *Schoharie and Kensico Reservoirs*, was $177,000,000.

The work on the *Reservoir* began 1903 and was completed 1915. The work on the *Acqueduct* began 1905 and was completed 1917.

The *Ashokan Reservoir* and the *Catskill Acqueduct* are heroic deeds of citizen's pride, of scientific genius and of sacrificing work.

New York State my best beloved State

During my travels I have seen many States of the Union, but *New York State* with its mountains, brooks, rivers, cateracts, lakes and Atlantic coasts, with its fruit and berry-belts, its woodlands and grainlands and grapecountries and hopcountries, its cities, villages and live people *is my best beloved State.*

On the 29th of October 1918 I saw in the Catskills the *Redwings* fly southward. In 1920 they winged their flight south over Woodstock, on the 3rd of November. The autumn of 1920 was exceptionally mild. Near Milton, Marlboro and Newburgh, Ulster Co., N. Y., they were picking some ripe strawberries in November. And from Syracuse, N.Y., Nov. 18th, was reported: They are picking white lilacs at Montville. Pansies are blooming at Liverpool. Violets are flowering at Ithaca. Robins are still pecking at the grapes at Cardiff, where the Cardiff Giant was disinterred. Red raspberries are yielding in Syracuse. Columbia berries are being picked at Baldwinsville. They are getting ready at Clay to make a new batch of dandelion wine.—W. B.

Two Fairytales for Kuku

Dedicated respectfully

to Kuku's Grandma, *Mrs. Eleonore Hunt Diederich*

Kuku and the Waterbabies
A Fairytale of Overlook Mountain

Woodstock Story No. 8
By William Benignus

One day the autobus did not come along to take Kuku to school. The school is quite a way off, along the Rock City Road a mile and a half up the mountain where it is built right in the middle of the woods, which makes it healthy and pleasant for children.

So what could Kuku do, but walk to school, and as she was yet a little girl, —just think of it! she celebrated her birthday a few days ago, when she became 4½ years old—, I of course had to accompany her.

Walking up the road on that fine October day we came to a brooklet which ran and babbled merrily downhill and passed under a short bridge that span the road. Kuku stopped on the bridge, looked up the brook and said: "Can you see that little tiny waterfall?" "Surely", said I. "Isn't that little waterfall cunning?", said Kuku. A little house stood farther up near the running waters. "Would you like to live in that little house?" said Kuku. "Surely", said I. "With vines around on the little windows", said Kuku. "And with all kinds of beautiful flowers and fruittrees in the garden," said I, "and the birds singing upon he branches and hopping around on the ground." "Let's go up", said Kuku. And we went up.

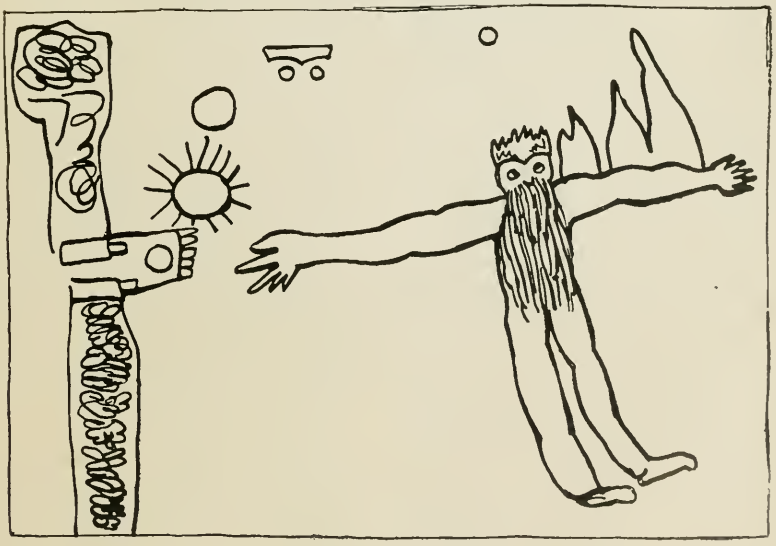
When we knocked at the door it opened and who do you think came out! The beautiful *Fairy of the Brook!* And she smiled and gave her milkwhite hand to Kuku and to me and greeted us graciously. "How do you do, little girl, darling Kuku?" she said— " I am quite glad to see you. I heard from your teacher that you are a bright little girl and can already do figuring and make drawings of houses and things. Come in, friends, and see my *Waterbabies* and have a little lunch before you walk farther on."

And what do you think we saw when we went into the house! Well, well! a dozen Waterbabies, perfectly sweet little elves, were playing with soapbubbles of glowing rainbowcolors, and the breezes blew the bubbles out thru the open backdoor into the garden. It was a big garden thru which the brooklet splashed with many little tiny waterfalls, and

seemed to rest and dream in little pebbly pools, then flowed on again and babbled and sang, and little gold - and silverfishies swam in the clear waters, and fairyflowers grew all around, and on the trees were hanging ripe fruits that glittered like diamonds, and from the vines hung big bunches of ripe grapes, and from the branches sang all kinds of wonderbirds, and soft, aromatic breezes blew, and joy was in the air and peace. We had lots of fun! The Waterbabies and we two chased the rainbowbubbles, and played in the brooklet, and danced and splashed around, and made all kinds of merry noise, and shouted and laughed and sang, and caught little gold- and silverfishies, and then we sprang and jumped around in the garden, and picked delicious berries, and plucked mellow, juicy fruits, and everything tasted better than anything you know, better than the best chocolatecandy, and the wonderbirds hopped around and flew around us singing, and they perched upon our shoulders and ate seeds from our hands which the fairy gave us, and then we had a delightful lunch with the best milk and cream and finest cakes and pies, all served to us by dainty, queer little elves and goblins, and we were happy, and when we left and thanked the good Fairy and bid goodbye to her and her dear, sweet little Waterbabies, she gave each one of us two a little shiny silverstar for good luck and as a souvenir and said affectionately: "Goodbye, my dears! Goodbye, Kuku darling! Call again! You are always welcome!"

The Man who holds the Mountains on his Arm

Woodstock Story No. 9
By Wm. Benignus



Drawing by Kuku

Considering *Kuku's* Drawing, done by her in a sunny hour in the open so spontaneously and without preliminary preparation on the inspiration of the moment, into my mind come the words of the psalmist (Psalm VIII): "*O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength.*" And the words of the immortal *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

flame up before me ("Nature", Chapter VI): "*Worlds revolve and intermingle without number or end, deep yawning under deep, and galaxy balancing galaxy, thruout absolute space.*"

On a fine September day, while I was doing some work in the garden, I talked with Kuku about the sun and the mountains. Kuku was busy with paper and pencil, and she at once drew this picture and surprised me with it, saying wistfully: "Mr. Benignus, that is you." I at once conceived the idea to unfold and express Kuku's thoughts in the tale here:

"Long, long ago it rained incessantly and the Earth was covered with water, so that even the highest mountains could not show their tops above it. The sky was black with heavy clouds, it rained and rained, fierce thunders rolled, blue lightnings flashed and lit up occasionally the tumultuously raging sea of giant-waves, while but seldom cheerful sunlight broke thru the darkness.

That time Patriarch Noah and his wife and sons and daughters and their children floated many many days and nights in the big Ark which Noah and his sons had built before the rains and floods came and in which its builders then took refuge. Besides his own folks Noah had taken with him into the Ark all the animals, pair by pair, which little girls and boys know so well from their toyarks. Men and creatures in the Ark floated such a long time upon the bosom of the waters that they became weary of it, and all wanted to walk on dry ground again and enjoy life and bask in the sunshine. So Noah said: "Let us pray, that the rains may cease." And they prayed, and the good Lord God heard them, had pity on them and spoke: "Be of good cheer! I will send my Strong Man, the *Man who holds the Mountains on his Arm*, to help you out of your difficulties." And the good Lord God called aloud, and the big *Strong Man* heard him in his dwelling on ever so big a sun far, far away, far and away beyond in the blackness of infinite space deeps. At once the Titan started and jumped from star to star, till he reached the Earthstar, where everything was covered with water. Oh, he was monstrously and powerfully big and strong, the *Big Man!* Bigger he was than all the mountains, and stronger he was than all the winds and waves and elements that battled so fiercely with each other.

When the *Big Man* reached the Earth, he cried with a voice that roared like the tumbling waters of a hundred million cataracts: "I will do it!!!" And he stretched out his left arm and began to lift. That was an arm, I tell you!, with muscles. With muscles of the spirit, oh! And he began to lift. And he lifted the mountains out of the deep abysms of the turbulent sea just as easy as if he lifted feathers, I tell you! He lifted whole rows of mountains high above the billows, so that the wet tops and sides glistened in the sun, and soon they were covered with rich vegetation. Noah and his people saw this, and with all the animals, pair by pair, they walked out of the Ark upon dry land and thanked the good Lord God for their delivery and were happy at heart.

Amongst the mountains which the *Big Man* lifted out of the deep waters were also the *Catskill Mountains* with the *Overlook Range*, at whose foot the village of Woodstock nestles."

If you look at Kuku's picture you notice how the *Big Man* holds on his left arm the mountains. In his right hand he holds the sun with its golden glory and the moon with its shimmer and sheen. A little higher up floats a ship of space, one of those which in the future, when the time of our Earth has come, will carry humans to another habitable star. Over the Titan's head glows this star. In his right hand he holds, that the Earth may become dry after all the rains and deluges, our radiant dayorb, the sun, one of the vast congeries of three thousand million suns within our universe, where boundary in space seems to be the external limit of the galaxy or Milky Way.

With his right hand the *Man who holds the Mountains on his Arm* points to a bridge with a gate to a garden "on the other side". Well, that sun is "the Rising Sun of the Future", when this old Earth shall be new again. The bridge leads across the sky and thru regions of the spheres to a great *Golden City* with pearlgates and magnificent

gardens. The city is the *"City of Bliss"*, and the gardens are the *"Paradise Gardens"*.

We all must cross that bridge sometime, and we all will enter the "Golden City" and walk in the "Gardens of Light" to enjoy their beauties and wonders. We shall have happy homes there and not dwell in idleness, but with busy and active minds we shall continue and accomplish the works most dear to us, which we have commenced on the Earth-star and could not finish, because "men's time is so short".

Baby William Hunt

Slumber Song. — By *William Benignus*

Be still, my darling, baby mine!
Listen! upon yon tree
a wonderbird from paradise
sings a sweet melody.

The bird's plumage is morning gold,
red, yellow, green and blue.
Listen! it sings a lulaby,
my loveheart dear, to you:

"Sleep, darling, sleep! Sleep, baby mine!
The stars are shining bright,
and seven fleecy silverclouds
sail on the sky. Good night!"

Baby Ellen

Dedicated sincerely to *Mrs. Sarah Livingstone-Mandhenk*

An angel clasps his silverlute,
he came from God on high
and sings to thee, my Babylee,
a whispered lulaby:

"Slumber sweetly, Babylee!
Slumber, Loveheart dear!
Mother guards her Babylee
and is ever near.
Sleep now, Babylee,
gem of mother's heart!
Sleep, my darling Babylee,
love's rosebud that thou art!"

Lulaby

The Mother sings:

"Sleep, my child. The wind blows by,
whirls about the leaves so dry,
sends them with a sound that thrills
far across the vales and hills.
Whirled by winds the leaves now fly—
Sleep, my child. The wind blows by.

"Softly sleep, dear child, tonight.
Summer went with flowers bright.
And the birds all! gone they are
to their southern home, so far.
Summer went with flowers bright —
Softly sleep, dear child, tonight.

"Go to sleep, my baby fair.
Give you pearls and jewels rare —
all be thine, baby mine,
spotless treasures pure and fine.
Give you pearls and jewels rare —
Go to sleep, my baby fair."

Stargemmed Night

Woodstock, Ulster Co., N. Y., night of October 8th to 9th, 1920.

Oh look, how clear,
so far, so near,
the sparkling skystars greet.
They seem to stand
over sea and land
and yet sail fast and fleet.

A flower unfurled
each star, a world
that swings thru space immense
and seeks its goal—
a longing soul
is traveling with it hence.

Far

Suggested by the Painting of *Mark Tobey*

Deeply in shadows the wide world lays,
a late bird soars by, a wandering soul, homeing,
— in realms of the Spirit my lone soul stays,
with the swift bird in flight to far distances roaming.

High across valleys, over mountains it goes,
thru space, to the City with Golden Gates,
—a bright lone star on the blue sky shows
the way to the goal where my soulmate waits.

The girl with the nutbrown hair.—Song

I love the girl with the nutbrown hair,
she is my beauty dear,
she is so sprightly, she is so fair,
none to my heart is so near.

As the soft touch of a summer breeze
her soft caress is to me,
charms as a goddess of ancient Greece,
sweetest of charms, has she.

And her kisses, pure as the mountainbrook
and rich as the richest wine,
and in her eyes the soulful look
and her great love are mine.

The Creator

Bright his eye and firm his hand.
Chaos whirls. With magic wand
of his will he breaks all bars,
out of formless mass shapes stars.

Meteors and Sun

A host of wandering meteors stormed thru space,
they fell into a great sun's troubled face.
The sun roared fiercely: "What shall that be?"
The meteors, melting, cried: "We love but thee!"

Statue of Liberty, New York

A Song of the "Dawn of Men's Brotherhood"

A Statue stands on Bedloes Island
in New York Bay near Battery Park,
she holds in raised hand over the island
a flaming torch as guiding mark.
GODDESS OF LIBERTY her name is,
her conquering rays pierce storm and night,
in our own hearts her light's white flame is,
for Truth and Liberty to fight.

A Statue stands on Bedloes Island,
SYMBOL OF FREEDOM to the world,
in breezes waving over the island
OLD GLORY proudly is unfurled—
they both herald a morning glorious
when golden-hued, with tidings good,
from nightmists rises grand, victorious
THE BRIGHT SUN OF MEN'S BROTHERHOOD.

William Benignus

Miss American Liberty

I love her, and I do my part
that *free we stay, with all my heart.*

"E Pluribus Unum"

God's Country America

Song of the Free

By

WILLIAM BENIGNUS

★

Oh tell us the name of the beauitful land
where the Dawn of *Men's glorious Morning* is glowing!
To this dear land we swear and give heart and give hand,
while from youth unto age our devotion is growing.
In this home of the brave, in this beautiful land,
bold *Freedom* with keen fiery sword has her stand:
God's Country! We love you, wherever we are,
we all love your proud flag with each State as a Star.

Thru our veins swiftly flows a glad feeling of might,
and high thoughts of great deeds to be done stir our being,
for the battles with wrong and the powers of night
must be won for bright *Love* which all men shall be seeing.
Let it rise, this bright *Light,* this *new Sun of the Morn,*
in the *land of the Free* where the *Truemen* are born.
God's Country! We love you, wherever we are,
we all love your proud flag with each State as a Star.

In glory you shine. *Your true message* it rings
o'er the world with the storm's conquering magic and motion,
like an eagle it soars when it rises and sings
and with thundering voice calls from ocean to ocean.
Oh sweet home of the brave, oh most beautiful land,
where Freedom with raised fiery torch has her stand,
God's Country! We love you, wherever we are,
we all love your proud flag with each State as a Star.

America as I wish it to be

To meet the often made reproof of some of my German acquaintances that I printed this poem in *1919* in my "Nature Melodies of God's Country", I state, that it appeared long before the worldwar in my book of American landscapes "Stimmen der Wasser", 184 pages, illusstrated, in the year *1908*. Here the poem is rendered in English. The book is on file in the *New York Public Library, 5. Avenue and 42. Street*, and there also can be read my *"Stories of the Catskills"* and my volume *"Wir überm Meer für Deutschlands Ehr"*.

Let my co-citizens of German ancestry mind this: *The German-Americans always have been and still are a political nonentity.* New York City alone counts at least 32 "Vereine", different organizations. In all of them *Politics* are forbidden. "Issues of To-day", Nov. 27, 1920, truly says: "The list of the 32 associations contains not a single one that does not depend for its existence upon an appeal to the emotions or the senses. Some pursue the commendable mission of relieving distress in Germany, but most of them are in some form or other related to *feasting, smoking, singing and feeding the senses, lulling the conscience* against the remembrances of the past six years like an insidious opiate and *unfitting their members* to cope with *the great issues of our time* that are on the table." During the late war the German-Americans — except such as had *sold their souls to the Wilsonian exploiters*—, were insulted, spit on, stepped upon, were forced to buy Liberty Bonds (oh Liberty Steak, Liberty Sausage, Liberty Cabbage, Liberty Bun and Liberty Cheese!), were forced to kiss on bended knees the flag, even the French flag. And *those whose name is Legion and whose numbers are Legion* stoned them, stormed and closed their theatres and assembly halls. The American citizens of German ancestry comprise 26,8 per cent. of the population, a percentage greater than that of any racial element.

The *America of which I sing* in my poem is the America of my ideal, the America of my dreams, the *America as I wish it to be*, the America as I am helping to make it, a real *God's Country*. It is not the America which it was since 1914, during the worldwar and up to date. *George Bernard Shaw*, in the "New York American", Sunday, Dec. 1920, draws vivid pictures of some of its acting personages and of its consequences. He paints vividly *Mr. Wilson*.

I want those who agitate for war to read the book of an Englishman, *Gibbs: —"Now it may be told"*. If they have any conscience and are not born monsters, they will be against all wars. But, alas, this is still a world of attack and defense. For a nation to defend itself is but natural and can not be avoided. Mankind is progressing very slowly from beast to divinity.

I am faithful in love to the land of my birth, the old fatherland, Germany. I also love my adopted country, the United States, where I live since 1882 and of which I am citizen by own choice since 1894. I am of the opinion: If patriotism is prejudiced and becomes race hate and persecution, and national vanity, it is detestable and unpardonable. It makes no difference to me of which religion or race man or woman are, as long as they are persons of truth, courage, conscience and kindness.

In closing I say: The death knell of the *British Empire* has sounded.

The *French People*, swelled with presumption and blinded by hate, rest not till they go down and disappear in utter destruction. The *French Black Horror* in the Rhineland no true German soul can ever forget.

The *Wilsonian-* and Palmer-minded *Government of the United States* will *earn* what it has *sown* in the Worldwar. The *Law of Divine Love* can not be sinned against unpunished, the unalterable *Moral Law* can not be overthrown.

William Benignus

New York City, January 1, 1921.

Our Country is always right in its "essences unchanged by man". Not so our Government. Proof: The late War. If our Government is wrong, let us set it right. — *William Benignus*,

New York City, Dec. 1920.

Hoiho, we sail!

Sailor's Song. — By *William Benignus*

Hoiho! We sail with the rising tide
o'er the shimmering saltmain's sheen;
thru mysteries of the deep and height
our ship sails, right between,
sails right between the turquoise sky
and the heaving emerald sea,
:,: while the waves and the winds, that wander by,
sing their sad, sweet melody. :,:

What do they sing and what do they bring?
They sing of the sailor's love
that flies like a gull on soaring wing
much faster than fastest dove.
Can you hear the sighs of the waves of the main
and the moans of the winds that weep
:,: with the sparkling drops of the falling rain,
that go back to the foaming deep? :,:

We stop *but a little while* in port
the wide and the far world over,
even in fairest port we can stop but short,
for our heart is a restless rover.
With the storms to fight is our valiant part,
and to conquer them, we like best;
:,: we are travelling on with a stout, brave heart
till we win the last port's rest. :,:

To my Readers

The letters given here express *the opinions of honest and true thinkers.*

With regard to this book I wish that my readers may feel toward it as warmly and as kindly as did *Dr. Max Nordau*, the eminent author, poet and philosopher, when I, a man unknown to him before, sent him my "Worldstream Songs". Follows, in translation, an extract from his letter:

Paris, March 30, 1906.
8 Rue Leonie 8.

Mr. William Benignus,
New York City.

My dear Sir and Poet:—Yes, your "Worldstream Songs" delighted me. They delighted me and they edified me, now, that I also know your life and your daily toils. That makes you a phenomenon to which we must take off our hat in mute respect. Indeed, you are a Sunchild, a Child of the Light, genuine clear thru, for only a man bearing a soul entirely woven of lightrays is able in midst of darkest pressures to have such bright thoughts and feelings as your poems express them.

In your poems is living and pulsing a wonderful flight of fancy, an inspiring idealism and a noble enjoyment of world and life, qualities which make you a remedy for modern neurasthenics.

Your little book will win for you as many admirers and friends as it finds readers. My sincere wish is, that there be many, very many. I give you a handshake in spirit, I shake and press your hand, so hard from strenuous work, and am with sincerest regards and respects

your *Dr. Max Nordau*

Parkersburg, W. Va.,
Sept., 26, 1919.

My dear Sir:—My hearty thanks for your book. *The more often I read it, the more help and courage I get out of it.*

Very best regards,
Katherine L. Weber

(From the Naturalist and Philosopher *John Burroughs*)

Riverby, West Park, N. Y.,
May 22, 1919.

I have read much of your prose, "Stories of the Catskills", with interest.
John Burroughs

(From an eminent poetess, journalist and writer)

A *genuine poet* is as rare as a perfect gem, and when one is found, it is a treasure worth the having. One of these rare beings is William Benignus. He is a true child of nature, loving her in all her varied moods. *His verses flow along like the brooks he loves so well*, smoothly and musically for the most part, yet with an occasional bit of roughness in rhyme and rhythm that redeems them from any tameness or monotony. — *Kate Woodward Noble*, Editor of "Waterbury American".

Waterbury, Conn., May 29, 1919.

(From the famous Author and Nature Writer *John C. French*, who wrote the book "The Passenger Pigeon in Pennsylvania")

Roulette, Pa., July 10, 1919

Dear Sir:—I enjoyed your "Stories of the Catskills" very much, as I was once familiar with the Hudson River environment and the old Croton Aqueduct.

Yours truly

John C. French

(From a true artist, *Mr. C. H. Shearer*, who painted the great picture "The Flight of the Wild Pigeons")

Dear Mr. Benignus:—Indeed I am very thankful to my dear friend Henry W. Shoemaker, who I believe has induced you to send me some of your good writing. We who have studied nature a lifetime naturally find few of a kin among men; and therefore I am glad to know you, if only by that which you have kindly sent me.

Very truly yours

C. H. Shearer

(From a savant of language and literature, *Prof. Dr. Kuno Francke*, of "Harvard University")

Gilbertsville, N. Y.,
Nov. 7, 1919.

Sehr geethrter Herr Benignus!—Nehmen Sie herzlichen Dank für die Zusendung Ihrer Gedichte. Es ist für mich wohltuend zu wissen, *dass es Menschen gibt, die in der Pflege der inneren Stimme und in dem Ahnen eines tieferen Zusammenhangs der Dinge Rettung aus der wüsten Gegenwart suchen und finden.*

Mit aufrichtigem Dank und besten Wünschen

Ihr sehr ergebener *Kuno Francke*

(From a Master of Music, *Walter Damrosch*)

October 20, 1919.—My dear Sir: I thank you for your books. I like your verses exceedingly, *they show real feeling and music.*—Very sincerely yours,

Walter Damrosch

March 16, 1920.—My dear Mr. Benignus: I received your songs. *The words are charming and have a real lyric quality.*—Very sincerely yours,

Walter Damrosch

(From an accomplished novelist, *Mrs. Elizabeth Tarlau-Ysaye*)

My dear Mr. Benignus:—Your verses are quite unusual; by far different from the work of other poets and *full of a tender and deep understanding of nature and nature's marvels.*

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. J. Tarlau-Ysaye

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